

Backwoods

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Home magazine

practical ideas for self-reliant living

Small town America

Making jelly
Irreverent jokes
Treating snake bite
Quick woolen mittens
Wild animal neighbors
Portable solar charger
Homemade pumpkin pie
Making money with birds

www.backwoodshome.com

Backwoods Home Magazine is written for people who have a desire to pursue personal independence, self sufficiency, and their dreams. It offers "how to" articles on owner-built housing, independent energy, gardening, health, self-employment, country living, and other topics related to an independent and self-reliant lifestyle.

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ABOUT THE COVER

On this issue's cover is Dave and Ilene's son, Robby Duffy, standing amid the fixins of a pumpkin pie in Santa Paula, California, almost nine years ago, when he was not quite two-years-old. Now he and his brothers, Jacob, 12, and Sam, 8, are old enough to have grown their own pumpkins in their very own garden in Oregon. Alas, kids grow up too soon, but pumpkin pies are forever.

If you'd like to bake your own pumpkin pie, try Jackie Clay's recipe on page 31. We guarantee you it will be just what the holidays call for.



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Publisher's Note

***Backwoods Home Cooking* cookbook**

We've produced a marvelous cookbook by taking most of the recipes from *Backwoods Home Magazine's* 14 years of existence and combining them into a sturdy spiral-bound 300-page cookbook. It's a hefty book, but due to the quality spiral wire, it opens nicely and lies flat like a good cookbook should. Not only does it contain the dozens of recipes printed in past issues, but it also has new recipes by the staff, including my superb ham and egg breakfast sandwich which I make for my sons on school day mornings, and John Silveira's famous kale soup (at least it should be famous), which he often makes for the entire staff in our in-office kitchen. John even taught me how to make his kale soup and now I grow my own kale just for that soup recipe.

The book is advertised on page 2, but if you look on pages 54-55 you'll see that we've packaged it with Jackie Clay's CD-ROM. If you buy the book we'll give you the CD-ROM for free. The CD-ROM normally sells for \$12.95. Such a deal! The cookbook is a "must have." If you're smart you'll buy two and give the second one to someone you like.



Everything on sale

While you're on pages 54-55 check out all the other specials we're offering for the holiday season. You can save a ton of money on those two pages. In fact, I think just about everything in the issue is at about the lowest prices we've ever had. We've even shaved \$7 off our popular *Emergency Preparedness and Survival Guide* (the ad is on page 22), normally \$18.95, now on sale for \$11.95, and we've cut the prices of all our big anthologies down to \$11.95.



This issue is full of these great buys, but keep in mind **they all end Dec. 25**. And please don't wait until the last minute if you expect items to arrive before Christmas. We ship quickly from our office

but the post office is beyond our control. If you want UPS or Fed-X shipping, that's a little extra, depending on the size of your order. You can call us toll-free at 1-800-835-2418 so we can determine how much.

***Small Town America* series**

Notice on page 56 that we have a *Small Town America* article.

We'd like to make this a regular series if we

can get others to write about their area, which can be in or near a small town. In my cross country driving trip two years ago I went through dozens of small towns that looked like nice places to live. America is literally full of them. I'll write about my great small town of Gold Beach, Oregon, in the next issue

We will, of course, pay you for your *Small Town America* article, plus we'll make your town famous. We pay by the page so the more good quality photos you send in the more the pay.

Webmaster visits *BHM's* office

Our webmaster, Oliver Del Signore, and his wife, Martha, took a car trip from Massachusetts to Oregon between issues to visit the *BHM* office in Gold Beach. The staff enjoyed meeting him in person for the first time after many cross-country phone conversations. Oliver created and maintains the very successful *BHM* website, www.backwoodshome.com, which now gets 80,000 visitors a month. An Italian and good cook, one night he treated us all to "real" Italian spaghetti. Mama mia!

Jokes, Last Word, gee-whiz!

We left out the *Irreverent Jokes Page* last issue, and did you ever write and call in to let us know. So the jokes are back this issue. If any readers out there come across some good jokes you'd like to share with other readers, please send them in to us so we continue to have a fresh supply. Some of our readers must keep in mind that these are "irreverent jokes," so there is no need to take offense.

Notice that this issue has neither a *gee-whiz!* page nor a *Last Word* column. The authors of these pages, O.E. MacDougal and John Silveira, are in southern California mourning the loss of their very close friend, Jim Callahan, who died suddenly as we approached deadline for this issue. The pages will return next issue. — **Dave Duffy**



Dave Duffy

My view

Animal rights loonies save the chickens but ruin the County Fair

We had our County Fair between issues.

It was a small Fair with just a few thousand in attendance, but no one in our town of 1500 would miss it for the world. There's the parade into the fairgrounds with pretty cowgirls on horses, fire engines sounding their bells and sirens, local businesses in hokey homemade floats, and all sorts of candy thrown to the children lining the one-mile route through town.

Then there's the Fair itself with its homegrown bands, immaculately groomed goats and sheep, and mouth watering blue ribbon pies. And, of course, there's midway, with its "characters" heralding the local children onto fantastic rides that come to this town only once a year. But the most popular part of our Fair is rodeo, not just because it has the real life drama of cowboy battling gravity as he rides a bronk or bull, but because at the end of rodeo comes the event that sums up the sheer delight of a small country Fair—*Barnyard Scramble*!

After the last bull has been ridden and the scores given out, there is a long pause before the gravel-voiced announcer suddenly bellows:

"Here it is folks, the event we've all been waiting for! Baaarnyaaaard Scraaaamble!!!"

Anticipating the announcement, dozens of children and their Moms have already made their way down the grandstand and are crowded together at a big gate at one end of the arena.

In *Barnyard Scramble*, the entire rodeo arena is used to free all manner of animals, from chickens and rabbits to goats and sheep, so that first the young kids (up to age 6), then the older kids (12 & under), can chase after them and catch them. They get to keep what they catch. All the animals have been donated by local folk.

It's the real young kids that cause much of the excitement. When they are released into the arena, the cameras flash and the crowd roars with laughter as they try to catch chickens and ducks and rabbits. Mom (Dads usually stays in the stands) often has to help her youngest catch a chicken, as these birds are real tricky runners. But in the end most of the youngsters catch something.

During the second wave, the older kids run and dive and roll around in the dirt as they try to corral everything from chickens to sheep. A fast sheep is not that easy to catch, especially when you can only use your bare hands. It is really fun to watch, and, according to my three young boys, even more fun to take part in.

Barnyard Scramble is one of those events that sets apart a small country Fair from a bigger city Fair.

But this year at the end of rodeo, the much anticipated announcement about *Barnyard Scramble* did not occur. The event our kids had waited all year for had been cancelled. Why? Animal rights activists in our town had simply gone to the Fair Board and convinced them that *Barnyard Scramble* constituted "cruelty to animals." No public debate, no sampling the opinion of the community, no testing of this "cruelty" hypothesis to see if it was true—just cancellation of *Barnyard Scramble*. Most Fairgoers learned of the cancellation only after they got to the Fair.

My neighbor, who is the father of two young children, summed up the general feeling in our community: *"Barnyard Scramble wasn't hurtin nuthin. Pretty soon they'll make it so the kids can't have any fun."*

It was another solid victory for the animal rights loonies, and another loss to a small community. I suppose this victory will be repeated again and again throughout America in a self righteous effort to protect chickens and other innocent animals throughout the land.

What a shame! We are becoming a nation of sheep as animal rights tyrants and other fringe groups among us tell us how to live. I expect little protest in our community. This little writeup may be all there is. More and more, people are just accepting these arbitrary decisions forced on us by self-proclaimed do-gooders who claim to be speaking for defenseless animals. There's no science behind their claims, no give and take argument about what's best for both animals and the community. A disgruntled, sour-pussed organized fringe group just puts up a fuss, and a community—at least the Fair Board that's supposed to speak for the community—caves in.

I wonder if they'll cancel midway next year because some group will claim our children are somehow being exploited by the "characters" who run the rides. Got to protect the children, you know, no matter how miserable you make them. Perhaps they'll forbid all Fair food entries because that blue ribbon apple pie *might* get cooked by someone who doesn't wash their hands thoroughly. Eating poison pie is no laughing matter, after all. Rodeo is a no brainer. We had a young cowboy ambulated out of the arena this year. He was okay, this time, but maybe next time he'll end up dead. Better cancel the event now while he's still alive.

You know what I think. I think we should round up all the do-gooder loonies who insist on telling us how to live our lives and put them in a cage. Let them out only on Halloween when their once-a-year expression of their ideas will fit in nicely with all the other scary, crazy stuff, then put them back in their cage for another year so we can get on with our normal lives.

Of course, I delude myself. We can't do that. These loonies have rights. I just wish the rest of us would start sticking up for ours.

— Dave Duffy

Your wild neighbors



By Jackie Clay

Photo by Dave Thompson

One of the definite bonuses of living in the backwoods is having only wildlife for neighbors. Here at our Montana mountain homestead, we see more wild animals than people, and we really like it that way. We've gotten so used to the comings and goings of our wild neighbors that I sometimes forget that others are not so familiar with the wildlife in the woods and meadows around their homes. Let me introduce you to some of your neighbors.

Bears

There are only a few areas throughout the United States that do not have bears living in the backwoods. Nearly all of these bears are **black bears** (even though many are not black at all). The "typical" black bear is a little bigger than a Newfoundland dog.

Adults weigh between 250 and 500 lbs., with some a bit smaller, and some fat, older males heavier. At a distance, they can be told by their round rump, which is higher than their shoulders when walking on all fours. The face profile is a bit Roman nosed or straight. The fur is a glistening black, with an occasional white marking on the chest or throat. Often the coloring around the muzzle and eyes is a rusty brown.

But black bears, especially in the west, are frequently brown, cinnamon, or even blondish. I saw a beautiful bear in our yard several years ago that was a shining reddish gold, like a red-haired girl. It was absolutely stunning in the morning sun. So gorgeous that I grabbed my camera and chased after it for half an hour in my underwear. In coastal British Columbia another unique coloration

of the black bear occurs: a white black bear.

It is this color variation that sometimes gets the black bear into trouble in areas where the grizzly bear also roams. I've had dozens of people tell me that a grizzly was in their yard or spotted down the road. But on checking out the tracks, it's a "brown" blackie 99% of the time. In years past, the other-than-black color phase was called a "Cinnamon Bear," as if it was another species. But now it is commonly known that a cinnamon colored bear is just a rust-colored black bear.

Tracks and signs. As bears are seldom seen during the daylight hours, you will more often see bear signs than a bear. Bear scat looks like a large dog pile, often a very large dog pile. In the spring there will be much greenish black coloring, as the bears

will be eating tender new growth. During the summer, you will see more traces of deer hair (bears often scavenge dead animals), berry seeds, and vegetation. In the autumn, bear scat is usually full of wild plum and chokecherry pits. Here, during chokecherry season, you'll all of a sudden see great black cow plops in the road. On closer inspection, they are bear plops, full of chokecherry pits.

You'll know a bear is in the neighborhood when wild apple, cherry, chokecherry, and hazelnut bushes are broken and their fruit harvested enmasse, often overnight. Or when your garbage can has been neatly opened and the contents strewn about on the lawn. Or when the birdfeeders have been emptied and rummaged through.

The tracks of a big adult are a little larger than the average human hand. The front paw shows a pad, five toes and claw marks quite close to the toes. The back foot leaves a nearly human foot shaped track with claws, again, close to the toe prints.

Considerations for the homesteader. The black bear is usually quite shy around humans. But there are a couple of exceptions. A female with cubs is very protective. Those cubs are adorable, but NEVER try to get close for a photograph or, worse yet, to "catch" a cub. Mama will object strenuously. People have been

mauled and even killed by protective females.

Black bears can become a nuisance around the homestead if you've left any type of food about. This is especially bad if you're in the camping mode while building a new home. They've learned, in many areas,



Front foot



Rear foot

Grizzly bear prints

that humans mean food sources and can come snooping around with their very good sense of smell. And they love garbage, livestock and pet food, beer, soda, hummingbird food (sugar water), butchering scraps, and honey—fresh from the bee hives. But



Black bear



Front foot



Rear foot

Black bear prints

the good news is that if you keep a very clean camp, leaving nothing out to attract bruin, he'll give the area a quick sniff and pad away for better pickings.

On occasion, a blackie will prey on livestock, usually small, young animals such as tethered goats or newborn calves lying far from their mother. For this reason, it's always a good idea to have your livestock in a barn or otherwise close to home at night.

Although a black bear has occasionally looked upon man as prey, the truth is that blackies are not lurking in the woods, ready to pounce on you. I've lived around them for most of my life, and have never had the remotest bit of "bear trouble."

The **grizzly bear** is neighbor to a few homesteaders, living primarily in northwestern Wyoming, scattered



Mountain lion

mountain areas throughout western Montana, western Canada, and in Alaska.

The grizzly is usually larger than the black bear, although there can be some confusion here, as a large black bear weighing 400 lbs. is bigger than a small female grizzly weighing only 250 lbs. The body profile is definitely different. A grizzly's rump is usually at or lower than the shoulder, which is humped. The face is dished, making the nose appear higher. There is also a shaggy appearance to the fur about the face and neck. The grizzly can be many colors, but never shiny black.

Being more of a predator than the blackie, the grizzly supplements its grass, root, seed, and fruit diet with

fish, deer, elk, and moose—often the young of the larger prey. But, like the black bear, it also loves carrion, garbage, and human food.

The chances of ever seeing a grizzly in the wild in the lower 48 states are very remote. We run the remote woods and mountains a lot, and have only seen a small number "in person." But it's a

good idea to keep this fellow in mind when hiking, camping, and living in the wilds, as he (or she) is more aggressive than the black bear, and has the equipment to do quite a bit of damage to a foolish human.

Never approach a grizzly with young (even large young; they're still her babies) or when it is near a food source, such as a carcass or garbage can. Nor should you surprise a bear, especially in dense brush or at close quarters. As with the blackie, keep all food sources out of camp and unavailable to the bear. This includes

feed, coolers, drinks, and garbage. And never put out bait to attract bears to your area. As the old saying goes, "A fed bear is a dead bear," meaning that bears that learn that humans provide food become problem bears and must be shot.

Tracks and signs. The grizzly leaves a distinct track because of the length of its claws, which are usually two or more inches longer than those of a black bear. These sharp "fingers" show as dots well away from the pad in the tracks. A black bear's claws are little longer than a big dog, and the indentations show quite close to the pad marks. While there can be quite a difference in the size of the individual bears, most adult grizzly tracks are quite a bit larger than those of black bears. And because of the sheer size and weight of an adult grizzly, often only the heel and front pad show in a hind paw print.

The scat is similar to that of a black bear, but usually larger and containing more animal hair.

While the grizzly can be an aggressive predator, there is little to fear living in grizzly country if one takes the normal "bear precautions" mentioned above.

Remember that no matter what you see in the movies, a grizzly is *not*



Front foot



Rear foot

Mountain lion prints



Mountain lion

likely to peer in your window at night or crash down your door in an effort to gobble up your family. In reality you stand a much better chance of being struck by a meteor.

Mountain lions

Mountain lions or cougars are king cats, found scattered throughout much of the United States and Canada. And cat-like they are; they act much like a very large (over 100 pounds) edition of your house cat. They play with toys (bits of hide or a dead rabbit), their family, and even chase their tails. They effectively stalk and kill game in scope with their size: often rabbits or deer. Cougars purr and even “meow” with a little kitten voice at times.

Mountain lions are becoming a bit too common in some areas, especially northern California, where they are not hunted and have learned to stroll into the edges of suburbia to snatch pet dogs and other small animals for easy meals.

There have been some attacks on humans, especially small children. Does this mean that we should live in terror of these critters? Not by a long shot. For every attack on humans by a cougar, there have been dozens of attacks by seemingly harmless pet dogs, such as poodles and cocker spaniels.

We have lived in cougar country for years, and have been careful to instruct our youngest son, David, in what to do if he should be approached by a cougar while he is alone. As I’ve said, cougars are very cat-like, and they are really timid and shy animals. Normally, all one has to do is to speak to a cougar to let it identify you as a human, and it bounds away in terror. If not, we’ve told David to grab up a stout club and “look big” by pulling his shirt or jacket up over his shoulders and holding his arms upright and out from his body. And stand still. As with any other predatory animal, running away

often initiates an immediate and very active chase response. If the cougar does not leave and stalks or approaches, we suggest adopting an aggressive stance: shout, stamp feet, and swing the club like he means business. Few cougars will stand in the face of such threatening behavior.

I knew of a fisherman who was attacked by a young (but large) cougar, who “fought” it off with a fly rod.

David also usually runs our mountains with his dog. While cougars do prey on dogs, a large fearless dog usually strikes terror into the heart of a lion. Here cougars are often hunted with hounds and they know that dogs plus humans often equals rifle shots.



Bobcat

While mountain lions are fairly common, chances are you will never even get a glimpse of one, even if you live in their backyard. I’ve been lucky enough to get a distant look at three in all the years I’ve lived in lion country. They definitely won’t break down your door to attack you.

Tracks and signs. A cougar track is quite large, wider than the average hand. In snow, it looks huge. You can

tell it from a bear track, as the hind foot leaves a track just about like the front paw—no bare-footed human foot look. And, because a cougar has retractable claws like your cat, you won’t see any claw indentations in the track. A dog or wolf leaves claw marks as well as paw prints.

In deep snow, you will get occasional light drag marks where the tip of the lion’s tail brushes the top of the snow here and there.

Considerations for the homesteader. Lions will occasionally take young calves, lambs, and goats, usually when they are quite a way from the buildings and activity of the family. Therefore, it’s best to bring the stock in to the barn or corrals at

night, just to be sure. In nearly 40 years, I’ve never lost an animal to a cougar or had any type of close encounter. Having one or more large dogs about the place that *stays home* is a definite plus, in my opinion.



Front foot



Rear foot

Bobcat prints

Bobcats and lynx

These short tailed cats are the smaller cousins of the cougar, and are more apt to be seen. The bobcat is quite common throughout much of the United States and Canada. This cat is a little bigger and huskier than the average big house cat, weighing in at between 15 and 25 pounds. He is reddish brown with black spots and white highlights under the chin and



Lynx

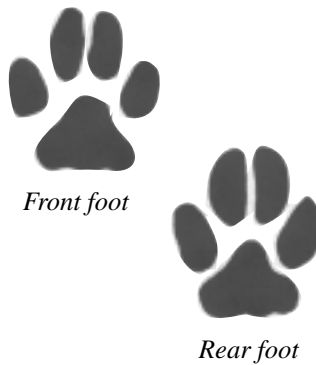
tail. His rump is higher than his shoulders and his tail is stumpy and only a few inches long. His feet are large for his size. Like his bigger cousin, the lynx, the bobcat has ear tufts, but they are shorter and less luxuriant.

The easiest way to tell a bobcat from a lynx is to first determine if lynx are known to live in your area. Where bobcats are found nearly everywhere with a bit of woods, the lynx is found almost exclusively in the north, in scattered populations.

Then consider the sheer size of the lynx, which is quite a bit taller and his paws and face are broader, as well. During the fall and winter, the lynx becomes quite greyish, where the bobcat stays more reddish brown in color.

Both the bobcat and lynx prey on rabbits, mice, voles, and birds.

Tracks and signs. The bobcat leaves a track that is cat-like, but larg-



Lynx prints

er. His claws leave no trace, as they are retractable. And in light snow or mud, you can notice the “fuzzy” marks of his large paws, rimming the large-cat track. In deep snow, you’ll just see large cat tracks that you know no housecat made.

The lynx, being a considerably larger cat, makes larger, deeper tracks than the bobcat. He also has built-in snowshoes in those huge, plush feet of his, enabling him to run after rabbits and other game on top of the snow during the winter.

Like the house cat, the bobcat and lynx will usually scrape dirt and litter over their scat and scratch at dead wood to sharpen their claws.

Considerations for the homesteader. Because the bobcat and lynx prey on small mammals and birds, they occasionally get into trouble by snatching poultry from the chicken yard. This is usually done at night, so the best prevention is to close the poultry inside a snug coop at night. We also close the small chicken door, as a bobcat could climb the wire fence and enter the coop. It’s an easy job to open the doors in the morning and it lets us sleep soundly, knowing our poultry is safe.

I’ve never known of a bobcat or lynx to attack a human that wasn’t seriously bothering it. In fact, David stalked to within 15 feet of a bobcat down in our valley, just for the fun of it. The bobcat was mousing, and engrossed in the hunt, allowing David to carefully crawl quite close. But the wind changed and the cat was gone in a flash. We were watching and David was thrilled.

Wolves

I think people are afraid of bears and wolves in wild areas more than anything else. Because we have lived much of our lives among these animals, folks are always asking us whether we have had “trouble” with them. The honest answer is a definite NO. Especially with wolves. These maligned canines are so shy and naturally wary of humans that we consid-



Wolf

er it a huge gift to even hear their howls or catch a fleeting long distance glimpse of one. I've studied wolves nearly all my life, and I know of not one substantiated attack on a human by a non-rabid wolf. (And I've been bitten by several dogs, from poodles to border collies.)

I guess it's all the stories and movies that have people so spooked by wolves. And their bright piercing yellow and black eyes that seem to look right through you.

Where wolves once roamed the entire United States and Canada, today you will only find them in northern Minnesota, parts of Wyoming and Montana, along with a few scattered, isolated populations in other states. There is a healthy wolf population in Alaska, along with much of the Canadian wilderness.

Despite the movies, wolves do not stalk and eat people. They much prefer rabbits, deer, caribou, and moose. They also eat thousands of mice, frogs, grasshoppers, and other small prey.

The grey wolf is about the size of a big German shepherd dog. His legs and body are long. His tail does not "wag," but is carried out from his body, being raised a bit while hunting or playing, drooping down when at ease. It never curls up over his back, like a husky.

While grey wolves can come in any color, from pure black to silvery white, most are shades of brown, black, silver, and tan.

You can tell a coyote from a wolf by looking at the coyote's slim, pointed muzzle and sharply pointed ears. A wolf's muzzle is strong and heavier, his ears broader. And the wolf

weighs from 60 to 100 lbs. or more, where the little coyote only weighs in at about 35 lbs. The coyote's howl is a yammering of yelps and howls—a single animal sounds like a pack at times. But the wolf howl is unmistakable. Full and rich, it is a sound that no movie can duplicate.

Tracks and signs. The wolf leaves a huge track. Not only are his feet

where the tip of his tail brushes the surface.

Wolves leave droppings that appear dog-like, but nearly always contain a good portion of hair, feathers, and bone. The wolf is an efficient consumer. He not only eats the muscle meat, as do humans, but the guts, the contents of the stomach and intestines, the skin and much hair or feathers, and even completely eats most of the bones. Because of this, you will find the lesser-digestible ingredients of his diet in his scat.

Considerations for the homesteader. As with living with any other wild predatory neighbors, it's a good idea to keep small and young livestock near the homestead buildings and human activity. Keeping young sheep or calves half a mile from home can be too much temptation at



Wolf



Front foot



Rear foot

Wolf prints

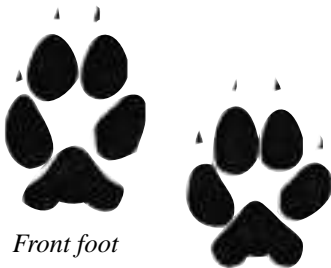
large, enabling him to run across snow, but his toes spread out, creating an even larger foot that does not sink deeply while he runs. An adult wolf's track is nearly as wide as a human hand, and about as long as the palm. The nails show plainly. In deep, fluffy snow, you will occasionally see wisps

times. It's best to bring such easy prey in at night.

I have homesteaded with wolves in the area for a long time, and have never lost a chicken or animal to a



Coyote



Front foot

Rear foot

Coyote prints

wolf—though I've lost a lot of poultry to the cute raccoon.

I don't believe that wolves present any threat to human beings, including children. Of course one wouldn't turn their two-year-old loose in the forest to wander alone, but a wild, healthy (i.e. not rabid) wolf certainly won't snatch Junior out of his playpen in the backyard. And as far as I know, there have been extremely few, if any, modern cases of rabid wolves in the U.S.

Coyotes

The coyote is common in much of the United States and Canada. He is the wolf's smaller cousin, much as the bobcat is to the lynx. Because of his furry coat, he looks larger than he actually is. Few coyotes weigh much more than 35-45 pounds. The coyote is also known as the brush wolf in some areas.

Where the grey wolf is extremely retiring, never living in areas of dense

human population, the coyote has been highly adaptable. There are coyotes living within the Los Angeles city limits. There they pick through garbage cans, steal dog food left outside, and even snatch occasional pets, stray cats, and small dogs.

Unfortunately, because these urban coyotes have lost their fear of man and are seldom hunted, they have become quite brazen, coming into yards during the day even when humans are present. There have been a few cases of small children being attacked.

But in the backwoods, the situation is far different. Coyotes are often hunted and shot at, and they are quite human-shy.

The coyote is long legged, grizzled greyish tan, with pointed ears and a slim, pointed muzzle. His bushy tail usually hangs down and out from his body and is the same color as his body. There is no black or white tip.

In the wild, the coyote eats many things, from wild fruit and mushrooms to mice, birds, rabbits, and occasional deer. He also eats many hundreds of grasshoppers, frogs, snakes, and bird eggs.

Tracks and signs. The coyote's track is very similar to that of a medium sized dog. In fact, it is very difficult to tell them apart. The track is about two inches long and an inch and a half wide. The nail prints are always visible.

In the snow, you can often distinguish a coyote track from a dog by following the track line. The coyote often pauses to mouse in the grass, digging and leaping up and pouncing down on a mouse beneath the snow. A dog seldom does this.

The coyote's scat is like the droppings of a medium sized dog, but nearly always contain hair, feathers, egg shells, or bone, and sometimes tin foil or other remains from garbage foraging.

Considerations for the homesteader. The coyote has gotten a bad

name with homesteaders, as he sometimes becomes bold and snatches lambs, poultry, and other small animals from the barnyard. Last year, despite two good dogs, a coyote sneaked in and grabbed a setting hen out of a bush, not 10 feet from our cow yard.

But this is an occasional happening, and with decent prevention, that's all it will ever be. Like all predators, most coyotes are most active at night. So by bringing poultry and small livestock inside their shelters at night (and having these buildings sturdily built), you will avoid much coyote trouble. Likewise, it's best to keep your small stock and poultry reasonably close to home.

A coyote is not likely to come near human habitation, especially if you have one or more large dogs guarding the area. But they will occasionally pick off a bird or small animal straying (or staked out) far from home.

We about lost a huge hen turkey to a coyote. The turkey was ranging too far from home, way down our valley. A coyote grabbed Turk Turk, but our milk cow (who *hates* dogs) attacked the coyote and made it drop the heavy turkey. The dogs ran the coyote off when they heard the commotion. And the turkey survived.

In rare instances, coyotes have attacked young children. But this is *rare*, and nearly always it's an urban coyote involved. I've never felt that my children were in any way unsafe, playing in coyote country. But then again, we live in the way-backwoods where coyotes are shy because most ranchers carry a loaded rifle in the back window of their trucks. But even in northern Minnesota, where we had many, many coyotes, I never heard of a single coyote-human conflict.

Next issue, I'll introduce you to some more of your wild neighbors so you can better get to know the ones that frequent *your* backwoods. Δ

Keep those gadgets working after the power goes out

By Jeffrey R. Yago, P.E., CEM

The recent 2003 northeast electric grid failure taught the residents of many large cities what most rural residents learned years ago: Lights, air conditioners, televisions, stereos, elevators, subways, computers, refrigerators, cash registers, money machines, gas pumps, and traffic lights do not work when the power goes out. They also learned very quickly that they could not recharge all of the dead batteries in their cell phones, pagers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), video cameras, laptop computers, digital cameras, and portable phones without electricity.

This lesson was not as obvious as you might think, as an interconnected utility grid tied to many different power plants surrounds all large

cities. A failure of one power plant or a downed power line is easily bypassed or back-fed from other sources in minutes by system managers, with little or no power interruption. At least that's the way it is designed to work. Obviously, the system managers during the August 14, 2003 East coast power outage didn't get the memo.

Those of us living in smaller

towns at the end of a single power line know what to expect when the power goes out and we have flashlights, battery-powered radios, and extra supplies at the ready, since we go through this with every major storm. Many rural residents have their own generators and backup power systems and do not worry when the grid goes down. We should keep in mind that most residents of large cities live in apartments or condos in multi-tenant buildings, and having their own generator, and a roof-mounted solar array is not possible.



A solar module and an endless variety of 12-volt adapters are available to power portable electronic devices.



Nickel cadmium and nickel metal hydride batteries in custom shapes

Batteries

If you are in this situation, you may not be able to keep your major appliances operating during a power outage, but there is a way to keep all those important communication gadgets working, regardless of how long the power is out. The most obvious first step is having lots of extra batteries on hand. Newer alkaline batteries have extremely long shelf life if stored in a cool and dry location, and these are the batteries you should buy for emergency power needs even though they are more expensive. Since you may be in the dark when spare batteries are needed, I suggest selecting an easy-to-find central location in your home or apartment where you should have at least eight each of the most common battery sizes. In most cases this will be the smaller



Versatile car adapter with adjustable voltage output for 6 to 21 volts and interchangeable tips (Nesco Battery Systems)

AAA, AA, and 9-volt batteries. Flashlights and desktop radios typically use the larger C or D-size cells and really use the power, so you may want to have even more of these larger sizes at the ready.

Most of today's cell phones, pagers, and laptop computers use larger built-in special voltage batteries, which are designed to be recharged only by an AC wall outlet while remaining in the device. If we could remove these batteries, you would find large heavy plastic blocks with odd shaped electrical contacts, having voltages well beyond our old familiar round flashlight batteries. To reduce battery weight while packing more and more operating time in as small a space as possible, most electronic device manufacturers first switched to nickel cadmium hydride (NiCad) batteries, then to more expensive nickel metal hydride (NiMH) batteries which have even more power density.

All NiCad batteries have a "memory" problem when recharged. If the battery is not completely discharged prior to recharging, the recharge will bring the battery back to full, but the battery will discharge down to the new low limit when it is discharged

again and generate less operating time.

More power demanding electronic devices are turning to nickel metal hydride rechargeable batteries that hold twice the charge of an alkaline battery and can be recharged up to 500 times. NiMH self-discharge faster than NiCad batteries when not being used, but NiMH batteries do not have the memory problem of NiCad batteries. Newer battery chargers are designed to recharge both NiCad and NiMH batteries equally well, assuming you have a wall outlet and grid power.

So how can you recharge these exotic internal batteries when the electric grid is down?

During any emergency or power outage you should already have a battery powered AM/FM radio, an LED or fluorescent battery room light, and a stock of spare disposable alkaline batteries that will keep these basic devices operational for several days. But, you will also want to keep your cell phone, pager, and your PDA or laptop computer operating, so you will need a different solution for these.

Adapters

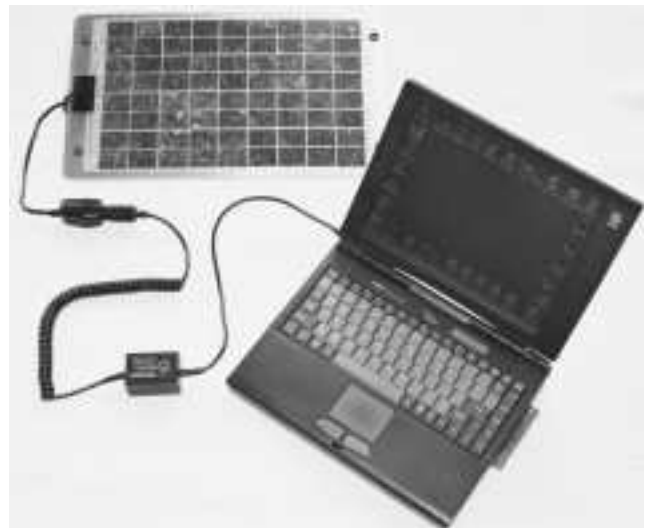
I suggest buying a low cost 12-volt car adapter for each of your electronic gadgets. Since today's more complex portable electronic devices require lots of battery power, most manufacturers offer optional low cost cables and charging adapters that will allow powering

them from a car's cigarette lighter socket. Some charging adapters include built-in circuits to convert the 12-volt DC car voltage into multiple voltages required by different electronic devices. For small electronic devices, this could be 3, 4½, 6, or 9 volts DC. However, some larger laptop computer batteries may require up to 21 volts DC, and a special higher cost adapter is needed to raise, not lower, the 12-volt car battery voltage. These more expensive 12-volt adapters include a small dial that allows you to select which output voltage your device requires, plus interchangeable output plugs which allow one device to fit almost any electronic device.

Since you may not want to idle your car for hours or risk a dead car battery just to recharge a cell phone, there are some really great new low cost products that will solve this charging problem without the need to connect to either a wall outlet or car battery.

Solar battery module

After you have selected which devices you need to keep operating, and you have purchased a 12-volt car adapter for each, you will need to



Larger 10-watt solar module and 12-volt car adapter to power laptop computer

purchase a solar battery charging module. Unlike the larger solar modules that you see along the highways to power signs and warning lights, these smaller solar modules are designed to be connected directly to the battery to be charged. Any required fuse or reverse current flow protection is built in, so all you need is a 12-volt female adapter which will accept the different car adapter plugs connected to your electronic devices. This allows using a single solar module to recharge all of your electronic gadgets that have a car adapter, and its small size can easily be stored in a briefcase, glove compartment, or utility drawer.

Since a cigarette lighter socket is a stan-

<u>Car Charger Products</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Web Address</u>
iSun Sport and Power Pack	ICP Global Technologies 514-270-5770	www.icpglobal.com
Solar Power Pak	Solar World Colorado Springs 800-246-7012	www.solar-world.com
Diogenes	Sundance Solar Warner, NV 603-456-2020	www.sundancesolar.com
PortaFlex and Accumanager 20	Creative Energy Technology 518-278-1428	www.cetsolar.com
#SPA	C. Crane Company 800-522-8863	www.ccrane.com
Solar Port and Solaris 25	Solardyne Corporation Portland, OR 503-830-8739	www.solardyne.com
Smart Laptop Adapter by Nesco Battery Systems	CompUSA computer stores	www.compusa.com
<u>12-volt Adapters and Device Connectors</u>		
#270-1561	Radio Shack stores	www.radioshack.com
#980-0692		
#273-1827		
#273-1817		



Inexpensive 2-watt solar module and 12-volt car adapter will recharge most small electronic devices.

dard physical size and voltage for all vehicles, you do not need a separate charger for each device and vehicle. Do not purchase a solar module smaller than 2-watt output, as it will take longer than a single afternoon to recharge all but the smallest battery sizes. For large laptop computer batteries, I recommend a 10-watt solar module, which will provide approximately 1 amp of charge current. Remember

that disposable alkaline batteries may have a very long life, but they cannot be recharged, so keep them separate from your rechargeable batteries and never connect them to any charger. Any battery you plan to recharge must be clearly labeled as "rechargeable." For any device that uses disposable batteries, you may want to replace them with rechargeable batteries and buy one of the desktop chargers that can recharge multiple batteries at the same time.

Solar chargers

I purchased the fold-up solar module and all of the adapter cables described in this article at a local Radio Shack store for under \$50. If you need a more professionally assembled system, there are several excellent solar battery charger kits

available that include everything in a compact fold up case.

Some solar chargers are similar to a typical desktop charger stand that holds multiple AAA, AA, C, and D-size rechargeable batteries, but this assumes they can be removed from the electronic device for recharging. The solar module is placed in a window facing the sun and connects to this charging station by a short cable. Some manufacturers offer a complete emergency power kit that includes a rechargeable light, fold-up solar module, and all required special adapters to fit most cell phones and laptop computers in an easy-to-store carry bag.

Uni-Solar makes solar modules in various sizes that have a flexible backing material that is almost unbreakable. I strongly recommend these flexible or hinged fold up modules for camping or mobile applications. The table lists some suppliers to help your battery charging needs.

(Jeff Yago's latest text titled, *Achieving Energy Independence—One Step At A Time*, provides a very good introduction to battery-based power systems. It is available from the *Backwoods Home Magazine* Bookstore or by calling 804-457-9566.

The solar equipment described in this article is available from Dunimis Technology Inc. at www.pvforyou.com or by calling 804-457-9566.) Δ

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Ayoob on Firearms

ON A QUIET HOLIDAY, A COP GIVES THANKS

Massad Ayoob wrote this article in November 2002. We run it now as a holiday tribute to firefighting, emergency medical, and law enforcement agencies and their personnel everywhere. — Editors

It's the early morning hours of the day after Thanksgiving 2002 as I write this. I'm still wide awake from patrol and won't be ready to sleep for a while anyway. Constant alert status does that to you. Adrenaline doesn't just go away when you're done with it.

The same people who work those midnight shifts when most are sleeping tend to work the holidays when most are relaxing. It bonds those folks with one another: hospital personnel, 24-hour store and restaurant workers, and particularly the men and women of the emergency services world: fire, ambulance, and police.

Do not shake your head and "tsk, tsk" for us. It's something we accepted when we took the job. If we work near where we live, we can get home for at least part of the holiday. If you're on evening shift, you try to stay moderate as you partake of the Thanksgiving feast at mid-day, then maybe get in a short nap, and you're ready for "second watch." Workin' midnights? Feel free to take that second helping, and a longer nap before you suit up for the graveyard shift, knowing that on this of all nights you probably won't get too hungry at work.

Even day shift is manageable. Long ago, as a young patrolman, I recall a Thanksgiving when I got off work at 1600 hours (4:00 PM) on the dot, then drove—still in uniform—in my private car to join my young wife at

her parents' for the family gathering. I peeled off the uniform shirt and jacket and the duty belt and locked them in the car. I chowed down on still-warm turkey while wearing blue uniform pants, shiny black patrol shoes, a white T-shirt, and a backup .38 in an ankle holster. It was the "immediately after work dress code" that LAPD's famed police trainer Rich Wemmer jokingly called "the Metro Tuxedo."

Quiet streets, quiet thoughts

Thanksgiving isn't just a day for scarfing poultry and pie and watching football. It's a day to give thanks. The best job can be turned into the worst torture by a bad boss, and the worst job can be made enjoyable by a good leader. I have a great boss, and that makes a satisfying job even more so. Recently divorced, I've volunteered to work a double shift on the holiday so the married folks can be home with their families. My chief makes a point of pulling the first half of day shift to ease the load for me. This is the kind of person you want to work for. Everyone under his command would follow him on a raid through the gates of Hell, and one or two suspect he might be able to figure out a way to get the warrant. Good bosses are something to give thanks for.

So are good working conditions. We have the best equipment, with redundant capability, something particularly important to emergency services personnel in rural areas like this, who work far from available backup.



Massad Ayoob

The guns are almost all Rugers. Each of us is issued the rugged Ruger P90 .45 automatic as a primary sidearm, along with the most street-proven snatch-resistant holster ever made, the Safariland 070/SS-III designed by ex-FBI agent Bill Rogers. For backup, each of us is issued a Ruger SP101 .357 Magnum snub-nose revolver and an Alessi concealment holster. Each patrol vehicle contains a Ruger Mini-14 .223 semiautomatic rifle with multiple high capacity magazines. All are made of stainless steel, the better to withstand the condensation that plagues equipment in an intensely four-season environment. (Today, temperatures in the low single digits will chill the rifle when the cruiser is parked unattended, and the heater will be on full blast when the vehicle is rolling. It's the reverse in summer heat, with triple-digit heat factors vis-

à-vis air conditioning.) Finally, each vehicle also contains a Mossberg Jungle Gun, the semiautomatic 12-gauge shotgun that was designed to Crane Arsenal specs for DEA to issue to indigenous support personnel in South American operations. While I prefer a rifle for most long gun needs in police work, the short barrel and folding stock of the Mossberg police shotgun make it faster to deploy out of the vehicle in a fast-breaking, close-range emergency.

A firearm is only as good as its ammunition. We have Federal full-power Express double-ought buckshot in the 12 gauges, and Black Hills ammo in everything else. In the .45s, it's the 230-grain Gold Dot bullet, running at 850 feet per second, the same load chosen for his personal defense by gun expert Peter Kokalis (Small Arms Review, Soldier of Fortune). In the .357s, it's the 125-grain Magnum hollow-point that is legendary for stopping power. In the .223, we use the 52-grain "Moly-coated" bullet at 3200 feet per second; massive stopping power, deadly accuracy, and penetration that is not excessive for the police patrol mission. We've never had a misfire in countless thousands of these rounds, and our department has won the last two state championships in a row shooting Black Hills. The combination of reliable guns and reliable ammo is comforting when you're out there alone. It's a combination you can go to the edge with, when the job description includes going to that very edge.

It's the same with the vehicles. While most of our patrol fleet is the last surviving full-size rear wheel drive four door sedan with separate heavy-duty frame, the Ford Crown Victoria, we also have the option of a four-wheel drive Chevy Tahoe. It's a "country cousin, city cousin" thing. True, with the Police Interceptor package (healthy engine, beefed up suspension and electrical system) the

Crown Vic is a responsive machine that's a pleasure to drive, especially when you have to drive fast. But in the boondocks, the leviathan Chevy SUV has much to recommend it. For one thing, it sits you up high, where you can look out over the traffic and spot things you wouldn't see in a low-slung sedan. Not for nothing do lifeguards sit on elevated chairs at the beach. This ain't a beach, but the lifeguard analogy remains in effect. Then, there's the weather to consider.

Yesterday was snowy and slushy, with auto accidents all over the state. Today has dawned clear, if bitter cold, and already our road crews—"seasoned" in more ways than one—have cleared the public ways. Their plows and their salt have taken the roads down to clear, dry asphalt. The interstate highway is like a race-ready track, and the secondary roads are almost as good.

But the dirt roads are still greasy with ice. Forecasts call for more snow tonight, and the shifts I've volunteered for extend 'til then. Besides, it's a holiday. City folk visiting their country cousins may take a dog for a walk in those beautiful snowy woods they read about in Robert Frost poems and get lost. Hunting season is in full swing, and a deerstalker may not return on time and require a search party. In such moments, big machines with four-wheel drive make a whole lot of sense. For today, I choose the Tahoe.

The best equipment. One more thing to be thankful for. The thanks are duly given.

The job is people

I enjoy this. I'm a full time trainer and a part-time cop, and most of my time for the police department is spent in plainclothes: training, admin, public relations, the occasional investigation. It's a treat to be back in uniform doing patrol, the very heart of police work whether your practice is located in the inner city or, like mine,

in the kind of community *Backwoods Home* subscribers buy the magazine to read about.

It's a beautiful place. The patrol tour takes me past breathtaking vistas of valley and of mountain, past the sort of winter wonderland scenes that many people only get to see on Christmas cards. At one point, I park at roadside. On the left, I'm monitoring traffic...but on the right, I'm gazing at the crystal-clear water of a brook, black in the winter light, as it cuts between two snowy banks filled with birch trees. A small pleasure for which to give thanks? No, a large pleasure. I've been on patrol on "busman's holidays" with New York City cops in parts of the Bronx that looked like bombed-out Dresden, with Kentucky State Troopers whose sectors encompassed the very depths of Appalachian poverty, and with South African Police in the heart of Soweto. People who read *Backwoods Home* make huge economic sacrifices to move to such places as where I am now, in the name of one of the few good catch-phrases the Yuppies ever came up with: Quality of Life. I get to work here. You bet I give thanks for that.

But, in the end, it's not the equipment or the scenery for which I give the most thanks. It's the people. Back road or interstate highway, people see the uniformed cop in the patrol car and wave at me. They use all their fingers, as opposed to the one-finger salutes I've seen the police car draw in some other places. I am happy to wave back.

Today, I'm sitting alone in this car, responsible for the safety of about three thousand people if something bad happens. That hit me my first night on solo patrol when I was 23 years old, and now, as an ancient Coposaurus Rex, that realization still has not lost its impact. IACP, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, used to say that a community needed one full-time officer per thou-

sand people to have proper police service. Crunch the numbers and figure out that there are only 40 hours of every 168-hour week worked per officer. Then factor in sick time, vacations, training time, paperwork time, court time, and all the rest, and understand why there is nowhere near one cop per thousand people really available for immediate response to needs for police service anywhere in America. In a perfect world, responsibility and power would be exactly commensurate, but this is not a perfect world. For cops, the responsibility always seems to outweigh the power.

But, particularly in a rural community, getting to know the people you serve makes up for a lot. You follow peoples' lives. You thrill at their triumphs. You hurt with them when they hurt.

I learn that this Thanksgiving morning, young Jeremiah has bagged a fine white-tail buck. It's his third in as many years. What makes this memorable is that Jeremiah is only 12 years old. The big deer fell to a single shot, just like his other two. This shot was a .223 Remington round, fired from a short-stocked Youth Model Ruger Model 77 bolt action rifle. That's a light load for deer, but it works if you have the patience and self-control to wait for the perfect moment and then deliver performance with unerring accuracy. Jeremiah does. Last year's buck, with his dad's .308, was also a clean and humane one-shot kill. So was the one the year before, when he was 10, with a muzzle-loader.

There are communities where a young man on a public way holding a rifle would elicit a call for the SWAT team. Up here, we know it's Jeremiah, and the cops I know will stop only to ask him if he's seen any deer sign today, and if he would like a ride back up the road to his father's truck. It's one of the good things about working in a place like this.

Sadly, not all our kids turn out like Jeremiah. The Tahoe carries me past the dwellings of two adult children of our community whom I've had to arrest and send to prison in years past. One has paid his debt to society. He served his sentence, got out, and started a small business. I hope he does OK. He was selling dope to young people. He did it for the quick buck. He found out in the state penitentiary that when you amortize your time behind bars, that quick buck isn't all that big. Another of life's lessons learned.

The other hasn't quite paid off his debt to society. It's still on mortgage, and in his case the mortgage is parole. He was a sexual predator when I put the handcuffs on him. It wasn't his first time. He has convinced the parole board that it was his last. We'll see. There are those in society who say that our approach to him should be "forgive and forget." That might have sounded good to me thirty-some years ago before I first donned a badge, but life experience has made me more cynical, as it does with almost all cops.

"Forgive and forget"? We are fully prepared to forgive. However, we have learned the hard way that forgiveness is contingent upon the certainty—not the well-intentioned assurance or fond hope, but the certainty—that the one who would be forgiven will do no further harm. Yes, cops can forgive. We just don't forget.

Part of our job is handling regular check-ins of parolees and probationers. Dispatch calls me to meet one such at the station. I do. He's a large young man, with a reticence about him that's hard to read. Embarrassment that he needs me to initial his "daily check?" I hope so. Being embarrassed by having done bad things is a good sign. This is why that place where we send the dangerous ones is called the "penitentiary." It is a place to be penitent, to admit

your faults and hopefully make the commitment that you will "go forth and sin no more." Or is it just a sullen resentment at having been caught, at having to conform to society's rules? Frankly, I don't know yet. Time will tell.

This kid is the same age as the boy my younger daughter is dating. Her beau seems like a nice young man. I'm glad that neither of my kids has ever hooked up with the kind of youth with whom The Job brings us in contact so often. "Younger Brat" is a senior in high school, has just gotten back some kick-ass SAT scores, and is safe and sound with her mom and her extended family this Thanksgiving. "Elder Brat" is three thousand miles away, a successful elementary school teacher working on her graduate degree, spending her second Thanksgiving with a husband who is the kind of young man that parents of daughters pray their children will marry. I am reminded that, yes, I have much for which to give thanks this day.

I was a young patrolman when I was given wise advice by Col. Paul Doyon, then superintendent of the New Hampshire State Police. "The Job is not badges or guns or clubs," he told me. "The Job is people." I never forgot that. It's the right day to give thanks for that handful of mentors we are given in life, among a sea of mere instructors.

Reflections

Darkness has long since fallen. The radio is eerily silent. People are not doing stupid and dangerous things. Life is good. I've logged 75 miles of road patrol and seen not a single candidate for a drunk driving stop, nor a single motorist exceeding the speed limit sufficiently to warrant a stop.

Things have been equally good for the other emergency services. In the small town I serve, only the police department has sustained on-duty presence. Our crack fire department

and our excellent emergency medical crew—the FAST squad, which stands for First Aid Support Team—are all volunteers. Today, most of them are on standby. These good men and women donate their time for both training and duty in a long-standing rural tradition of community members contributing to the safety of the place where they live. They're drinking apple cider instead of hard cider with their Thanksgiving turkey, checking the pagers on their belts, ready at a moment's notice to race to wherever they may be needed to quench flames or stabilize a life-threatening illness or injury. Their job is cheating death. They do it very well. They must be giving thanks that their services are not needed today and tonight, even as I am giving thanks for the exact same thing.

But death can't always be cheated, even in the quiet places. Last week in the small town of Red Bluff, California, a 31-year-old policeman named David Mobilio was murdered execution-style as he gassed up his patrol car. I was in nearby Sacramento consulting with a local agency in regard to an officer involved shooting case, and saw the helpless frustration in the faces of Mobilio's brother officers. Their badges wrapped in black, the universal symbol of mourning for a brother lost in the line of duty, they asked themselves what could motivate even the most vicious sociopath to murder a cop that way. On Tuesday morning, as I was about to fly home, the local radio stations came alive with reports that the suspect had been cornered in a hotel by police in Concord, New Hampshire.

I live in Concord, a short drive from the community I serve as a police officer. By the time I reached the Sacramento airport, the radio was reporting that the Concord PD special reaction team had taken the suspect into custody, alive. I arrived home in the wee hours of Wednesday, and the

media seemed to be focusing on the fact that when he fought police while being booked, an existing wound on the cop-killer's head had re-opened, and required a bandage after he had been restrained. He had told reporters that he had murdered the young officer to make a statement about police brutality.

Now it was Thursday. It had been a quiet Thanksgiving. Just before I went 10-2, off duty, I typed out a letter to the local newspaper commending the Concord cops and the resident FBI agents for their professionalism, courage, and restraint in taking the suspected cop-killer alive. I could also give thanks for the fact that I've been able to go to other countries and see how things are done elsewhere. I've been to places where a man like this would have left the scene in a body bag whether or not he resisted. It was a day to give thanks for living in the best country with the best cops.

Driving home, I realized something. I had started the day feeling sorry for myself because I was spending my first whole Thanksgiving away from nuclear family. I had ended the day giving thanks that my kids and my ex were OK. And I had finished it with renewed pride in being a member of another family, the family of emergency service personnel who swear an oath to sacrifice their lives if they must, to protect the people they exist to serve.

I didn't feel sorry for myself anymore. I realized that I had just spent a Thanksgiving actually giving thanks instead of just eating and partying.

And I give thanks for that epiphany, too.

This column is respectfully dedicated to the memory of Officer David Mobilio of the Red Bluff, California, Police Department. Δ

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Shaving with a straight razor

By Steve Gregg

I went to my grandfather one day and said, "Papaw, show me how to shave with a straight razor."

My grandfather was a kind, gentle man, and I was the apple of his eye. I could do no wrong. So I was somewhat taken aback when he looked at me as though I were an idiot and said, "They, great I am!" His catch phrase. "What do you want to know that for?"

"Well," I stammered, blinking and trying to think of an answer, "because a day could come when there aren't any razor blades."

"Why would that happen?" He asked, looking at me with that you-poor-dumb-boy look.

"I don't know. Just show me how."

That was more than 20 years ago; I've been shaving with a straight razor ever since. Why? Because I fell in love with it—from honing and stropping my razor, to whipping the lather, to the sensation of the steel gliding across my face. There's nothing like it.

I don't even own a safety razor anymore, or a can of that shake-it-and-squirt shaving cream for that matter. My only regret is not keeping all the money I've saved over the years by switching to a straight razor.

Want to give it a try? It's easy, fun, pleasurable, and cost effective. In all fairness, though, somebody living in Afghanistan might argue with me, but that's because they don't have a choice in the matter. They've proba-

bly never seen anything but a straight razor. Here in America it's nothing more than a novelty, a relic from a bygone era, but it's also a way to preserve a part of our past that every man used to take for granted.

Besides, what if a day really does come when there aren't any razor blades?

The first straight razor I ever bought cost \$20 brand-new and was made in Germany by Robert Klaas. Despite



The proper way to hold a straight razor

what you may think, a brand new straight razor is not ready to shave with. It has to be sharpened first. This is done on a razor hone (I am fortunate enough to have located an antique razor hone at an antiques store) or a very fine sharpening stone.

You will also need a razor strop (not "strap" as most people think), strop dressing, a mug filled with a disk of Williams' mug soap (better than any I've tried), and a shaving brush. All are available on the Internet (www.shavingsupplies.com) and at some drug stores.

Sharpening your razor

Place the razor perfectly flat on the stone with the edge turned away from you. Stroke it as if you're trying to slice a piece of the stone, as if you were whittling. Apply very little pressure, not much more than the weight of the razor. After a dozen or so strokes, flip it over. With the cutting edge facing you this time, draw it toward you. Take the same number of strokes.

All quality straight razors are "hollow ground" and made of high-carbon steel, meaning you don't have to worry about holding any kind of an angle while sharpening. It also means it will rust. Very easily, I might add.

After honing, the razor goes over to the razor strop. The strop consists of a thick piece of canvas on one side, a thick piece of leather on the other. The canvas side warms the steel and gets it ready for the leather side. You can't see it, but sharpening on the stone leaves a microscopic "burr" along the edge. Stropping removes the burr. Believe me, you can feel it when you shave.

Pull the strop tight and begin on the canvas side. Strop away from the cutting edge. If the strop bows when you begin stropping, you're either applying too much pressure or you're not holding the strop taught enough. Do it just the way they do it in a Western movie; i.e., drag the razor away from you, flip it over, and pull it back. Speed is not a factor. Take eight or ten strokes on each side of the blade.

Now go to the leather side. If you did not already apply strop dressing, do so now. (Strop dressing is a very fine honing compound of about 6,000 grit. It also preserves the leather.) Strop your razor just like you did on the canvas side.

You now have a sharpened straight razor.

Shaving

Drop a disk of soap into your mug, get your new brush (badger hair is best), add a few drops of hot water, and begin whipping. The lather should be just like the kind that comes from a can—thick and creamy. It takes some practice to learn how much water to add, but it isn't much.

Wet your face with hot water and apply the cream with the brush.

Grab up your razor. Hold it just like they do in the movies. Begin on a part of your face that's easy to get to and that you're comfortable with. Try going with the grain. If the razor pulls, it's not sharp enough. Clean your face off and begin again. A sharp razor will glide over your face just about like a safety razor.

Now go against the grain. Test the freshly shaved spot with the back of your hand. If you feel stubble, dip the razor into cold water and make another

pass. Cold water lessens razor burn.

Some areas of the face are rather tricky. The only advice I can give you is to just keep trying till you find the most comfortable approach. It'll come to you. After all, your grandfather did it, didn't he?

Cleaning up

Now rinse the soap off your face with cold water. Rinse your razor off and dry it thoroughly. Place it on a shelf and pick up your brush. Rinse it off and hang it someplace to dry. Do not leave it in the mug. If you do, you'll eventually ruin it.

If you use aftershave lotion (I never do), splash some on and congratulate yourself for learning a new skill. Now go show your wife, but don't try to talk her into shaving her legs with your straight razor. You'll only be wasting your breath.

The more you use your razor, the easier it will be to sharpen and the sharper it will become. It will also begin to turn black with age. Don't be alarmed. High-carbon steel does that. It's a sign of the quality of the steel. Rust, on the other hand, will have an orange appearance—you can feel rust. Immediately



Williams' mug soap; mug & brush, lathered and ready to use; strop dressing; razor strop

remove any rust with a little mineral oil and a rag, and find a better place to store your razor.

Final thoughts on razors

Some antique straight razors are worth thousands of dollars, but most are worth nothing more than what you're willing to pay for them. Just because it's old doesn't mean it's worth anything.

I have two antique straight razors, but they're not valuable. One is made by The Torrey Razor Company of Massachusetts and has an ivory handle. It cost me \$15 at a junk store. The other one is made in Sweden by Eskilstuna, also \$15. Both are excellent razors.

My strop is made by the Illinois Razor Strop Company and is a number 127. Brand new, it cost me \$20—a lot of money 20-plus years ago. The company is still in business, and they do make good strops, but the new ones are not heavy enough to suit me. The red leather, Russian strops are much better. Purchase strop dressing along with the strop.

You will also see what's called a "paddle strop." Don't waste your money. They're great for something like a wood chisel, but not a straight razor.



Clockwise from the bottom left: German-made, bought new 20-plus years ago (steel is starting to blacken); antique with an ivory handle (USA); circa 1940 antique (Sweden); antique razor hone

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A few tips for an old razor that you actually intend on using:

1. Stay away from one with excessive rust.
2. Check for nicks and cracks in the steel.
3. Check for cracks in the handle.
4. It should open and close with a very light touch—a straight razor should practically fall open when you pick it up.

Tips for a new razor:

1. Stay away from stainless steel. It's too hard to sharpen. Besides, all steel rusts eventually, even stainless. If it doesn't, it contains more alloys than steel.
2. Try to buy from a place where you can actually hold the razor, or at least be able to return it if you don't like it. Nearly all straight razors will have a different feel and balance to them.

Shaving with a straight razor does take some getting used to. If you're one of those men who wants a super close shave that feels like a baby's skin, forget it. Just stick with the triple blade, Teflon coated, \$15 per pack sort of razor. But if you do Civil War reenactments or living history performances, or just like the old ways of doing things, a straight razor may be just what you need. Me? I just like shaving this way. If you put a new blade in your razor and make all

the other preparations needed before shaving, I can mix my soap, hone my razor, shave, and be done just as quickly as you can—and I'll have a lot more fun doing it.

One final thought. My Papaw died years ago, but I know he's looking down from somewhere up above and shaking his head as I shave, wondering to this very day why his favorite grandson is so stupid. A straight razor. "They great I am!" Δ

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Vise Dremel Moto Tool mount

By Dana Martin Batory

Sometimes it seems two hands are not enough—three would be nice, four even better. This economical, easy to build jig solves that common workshop problem. Designed to make use of standard pine 2x4 scrap lumber and some ordinary hardware, it firmly holds a Dremel Moto Tool (or a similar tool) and in turn is supported securely between the jaws of a vise, freeing both your hands for grinding, carving, etc.

The project can be accomplished using hand tools, but power tools will give more precision.



The parts making up the vise mount. Holes have been drilled in the blank and the expansion slot has been cut. The bolt, Tee nut, and washer are ready to be installed.

General construction

Pine 2x4s under ordinary conditions will work fine. If the jig is going to see long and rough use, a hardwood such as oak, beech, or maple should be used. If you have access to a machine shop the jig can be duplicated in brass, aluminum, or mild steel. Be sure to measure the diameter of the tool's housing before drilling. They can vary.



The vise mount in use (horizontally)

Materials:

one blank, 10" long by 3½" wide by 1½" thick
one ⅜"x16 4-inch-long bolt
one ⅜"x16 Tee nut
one ⅜" inside diameter washer

Instructions:

Cut blank to length and width. Lay out all lines and holes. Drill opening for Dremel Tool with a 1⅞-inch bit, hole saw, or circle cutter. If using a drill press do not hand hold—use clamps and plenty of them. Prepare bolt hole by first countersinking for the 1-inch flange of the Tee nut. Use a 1-inch spade bit and drill about ⅜ inch deep. Follow this with a ½-inch bit using the first hole as a drill guide. Saw kerf in end. Cut out tongue.



The vise mount in use (vertically)

Sand, varnish, and wax the jig. Tap Tee nut firmly into place. Run through bolt and washer.

Use of the jig

Place the jig in the vise and tighten jaws. Slip the Moto Tool into the jig and snug up with the bolt. Do not over tighten, as you can break the motor housing. The jig can be used vertically, horizontally, or even tilted. Δ

Jackie Clay's homemade pumpkin pie

1 raw pie crust

Filling:

3 eggs
1½ cups mashed pumpkin
½ cup brown sugar
½ cup sugar
½ tsp. ground cloves
½ tsp. nutmeg
1 tsp. ginger
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 cup milk
2 tsp. melted butter
1 Tbsp. flour

Beat the eggs. Add pumpkin, sugars, salt and spices. Mix. Add the milk and mix. Add the flour and melted butter. Mix well.

Place in pie crust. Bake for 15 minutes at 400 degrees. Turn down heat to 350 degrees for 45 minutes or until a straw inserted in the center comes out clean.

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THE IRREVERENT JOKE PAGE

(Believing it is important for people to be able to laugh at themselves, this is a continuing feature in *Backwoods Home Magazine*. We invite readers to submit any jokes you'd like to share to *BHM*, P.O. Box 712, Gold Beach, OR 97444. There is no payment for jokes used.)

In a big city at a crowded busy bus stop there was a beautiful young woman wearing a tight mini skirt. As the bus stopped and it was her turn to get on, she became aware that her skirt was too tight to allow her leg to come up to the height of the first step of the bus.

Slightly embarrassed and with a quick smile to the bus driver, she reached behind her to unzip her skirt a little, thinking that this would give her enough slack to raise her leg. Again, she tried to make the step only to discover she still couldn't. So, a little more embarrassed, she once again reached behind her to unzip her skirt a little more, and for the second time attempted the step. Still, much to her chagrin, she could not raise her leg. With a little smile at the driver, she again reached behind to unzip a little more and again was unable to make the step.

About this time, a large Texan who was standing behind her in line picked her up easily by the waist and placed her gently on the step of the bus. She went ballistic, turned to the would-be good Samaritan, and yelled, "How dare you touch my body! I don't even know who you are!"

The Texan smiled and drawled, "Well, ma'am, normally I would agree with you, but after you unzipped my fly three times, I kinda figured we was friends."

submitted by: Peter Martin, Eules, Texas

Out of the Mouths of Babes

After a church service on Sunday morning, a young boy suddenly announced to his mother, "Mom, I've decided to become a minister when I grow up." "That's okay with us, but what made you decide that?" "Well," said the little boy, "I have to go to church on Sunday anyway, and I figure it will be more fun to stand up and yell, than to sit and listen."

The Sunday School Teacher asks, "Now, Johnny, tell me frankly, do you say prayers before eating?" "No, sir," little Johnny replies, "I don't have to. My Mom is a good cook."

A man was walking along the beach when he stumbled upon a lamp. He picked it up and rubbed the sand off of it. All of a sudden a genie popped out. "I will grant you one wish, anything you want I will grant you. Just name it." The man pondered for a while and then asked the genie if he could build him a bridge to Hawaii. He told the genie he really wanted to go to Hawaii but couldn't stand planes or ships. He wanted to drive there. The genie asked the man if he was crazy. "Don't you know how impossible it would be to build a bridge all the way to Hawaii, why the cement pillars would be immense. No, you come up with another wish, this time make it a good one." The man thought for a minute, then said, "OK I would like to understand women." The genie thought for a little while, then asked the man how many lanes he wanted on his bridge.

Q: How do men sort their laundry?
A: "Filthy" and "Filthy but Wearable."

Q: How does a man show he's planning for the future?
A: He buys two cases of beer instead of one.

Church Bulletin Bloopers:

Sometimes, writers of church bulletins get in a hurry and do not proofread for content, just spelling, and the bulletins turn out items like the following:

This afternoon there will be a meeting in the south and north ends of this church. Children will be baptized at both ends.

The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind and they can be seen in the church basement on Friday afternoon.

Tonight's sermon: "What is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.

After every flight, pilots fill out a form called a gripe sheet, which conveys to the mechanics problems encountered with the aircraft during the flight that need repair or correction. The mechanics read and correct the problem, and then respond in writing on the lower half of the form what remedial action was taken, and the pilot reviews the gripe sheets before the next flight. Never let it be said that ground crews and engineers lack a sense of humor.

Here are some actual logged maintenance complaints and problems as submitted by Qantas pilots and the solution recorded by maintenance engineers.

(P = The problem logged by the pilot.)

(S = The solution and action taken by the engineers.)

P: Left inside main tyre almost needs replacement.

S: Almost replaced left inside main tyre.

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.

S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

P: Something loose in cockpit.

S: Something tightened in cockpit.

P: Dead bugs on windshield.

S: Live bugs on back-order.

P: Autopilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.

S: Cannot reproduce problem on ground.

P: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.

S: Evidence removed.

P: DME volume unbelievably loud.

S: DME volume set to more believable level.

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.

S: That's what they're there for.

P: IFF inoperative.

S: IFF always inoperative in OFF mode.

P: Suspected crack in windshield.

S: Suspect you're right.

P: Number 3 engine missing.

S: Engine found on right wing after brief search.

P: Aircraft handles funny.

S: Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right, and be serious.

P: Target radar hums.

S: Reprogrammed target radar with lyrics.

P: Mouse in cockpit.

S: Cat installed.

P: Noise coming from under instrument panel.

Sounds like a midget pounding on something with a hammer.

S: Took hammer away from midget

There was this guy who went golfing every Saturday and Sunday. It didn't matter what kind of weather it was, he was hooked on a round of golf on his days off.

One Saturday he left the house early and headed for the golf course, but it was so bitter cold that he decided he wouldn't golf that day and went back home.

His wife was still in bed when he got there, so he took off his clothes and snuggled up to his wife's backside and said, "Terrible weather out there."

She replied, "Yeah, and can you believe my stupid husband went golfing."

.....
 • A bum, who'd obviously seen more than his share of
 • hard times, approached a well-dressed man on the
 • street. "Hey, Buddycan you spare two dollars?"
 • The well-dressed man replied "You're not going to
 • spend it on liquor are you?"
 • "No, sir, I don't drink," retorts the bum.
 • "You're not going to throw it away on fishing gear, are
 • you?" ... the gentleman asked.
 • "No way! ... I don't fish either!" ... answered the bum.
 • "You wouldn't waste the money on a deer lease,
 • would you?" asks the man.
 • "Never!" says the bum, "I don't hunt!"
 • So the man asked the bum if he'd like to come home
 • with him for a home cooked meal. The bum accepted
 • eagerly. While they were heading for the man's house,
 • the bum's curiosity got the better of him ... "Isn't your
 • wife going to be upset when you bring a guy like me to
 • your house for dinner?"
 • "Probably," said the man, "but it'll be well worth it for
 • her to see what happens to a man that doesn't drink,
 • fish or hunt".
 •

Making jelly

with horseradish, sassafras tea, dandelions, roses, corn cobs, & onions

By Gaynya Willis

My years in the kitchen have taught me to have fun with the old standards. With six children, it was a sure thing that I had to put up lots of jelly and jam, so I found and worked out a few recipes for pleasure.

These do not use standard fruits. Many are eaten with meats and all have proven to be excellent flea market and festival sellers.

Always be sure your state allows you to sell home-canned foods. For sales purposes, I've used baby food jars collected from friends, sealed with wax and topped by a pretty circle of fabric and a tie.

We will start with my personal favorite, good on any meat, but heaven on ham as a glaze.

Horseradish jelly:

3½ cups sugar
½ cup prepared horseradish
½ cup cider vinegar
½ cup liquid pectin

Put first three ingredients in a large saucepan, stir over medium heat until the sugar dissolves and a full rolling boil is reached. Stir pectin in all at once and return to a rolling boil. Remove from heat, skim, pour at once into hot sterilized jars to within ½ inch of rim. Cover with ⅛ inch of paraffin or hot sterile lid. Makes 3 (8oz.) glasses.

The following "rootbeer" jelly is a real pleaser.

Sassafras jelly:

3 cups strong sassafras tea
3½ cups sugar
1 box powdered pectin

Mix tea and pectin. Over high heat quickly bring mixture to a boil, stirring occasionally. Add sugar all at once. Bring to a rolling boil, boil hard one minute always stirring. Do jelly test and cook until test succeeds. Pour into hot sterile jars to ½ inch from rim. Seal with paraffin or lid.

For dandelion jelly, gather 3 cups of fresh dandelion flowers, preferably with morning dew still clinging. Boil for 10 minutes in one quart of water. Strain through damp jelly bag, saving 3 cups of the tea. You can drink what's leftover, it's good.



Dandelion jelly:

3 cups dandelion tea
1 pkg. powdered pectin
5½ cups sugar (or use 4 cups and boil longer after adding pectin)
1 Tbsp. orange extract may be added if desired.

Combine tea and pectin in a large pan. Bring to boil over high heat, until it can't be stirred down. Add all sugar at once. Return to rolling boil. Boil one minute. Do jelly test and continue boiling until reached. Add extract, if desired, then pour into hot

sterile jars, leaving ¼ inch headroom. Seal with wax or sterile lids. Makes 3 pints.

The following is a favorite, both for the subtle flavor and the color that the roses give. Red roses are prettier but any color will do. And don't overlook wild roses.

Pick 4 cups of rose petals. Place on a screen to sun dry for 4 hours. Wash quickly in cold water to remove any dust, etc. Put in a pot with 3 cups of water, bruise petals a little to help release flavor and color. Bring to a boil, cover and let stand 15 minutes. Strain juice, you should have 3 cups.

Rose Petal jelly:

3 cups rose liquid
1 box powdered pectin
4 cups sugar

Combine liquid and pectin in large pan. Bring to a full boil that cannot be stirred down. Add the sugar all at once and return to a hard boil stirring for two minutes. Pour in sterile jars and seal with lids or paraffin.

Corncob jelly:

10 red corn cobs
6 cups water
1 pkg. pectin
3 cups of sugar

Break cobs, boil in water for 25 minutes. Strain, reserving 3 cups. Add pectin, bring to a full rolling boil. Add sugar and boil hard for two minutes or until jelly test succeeds. Pour into hot sterile jars and seal with sterile lids or paraffin.

This has always sold well for me. I've also packed 10 corn cobs in a ziplock bag along with the recipe. At three dollars a bag, none have ever come home with me.

To make the onion juice for the following recipe, mince two pounds of sweet onions. Add to 3 cups water, bring to boil for 5 minutes. Strain, reserve 3 cups. Add a little water, if needed.

Onion jelly:

3 cups onion juice
1 pkg. powdered pectin
¾ cup white vinegar
5½ cups sugar

Combine onion juice, vinegar, and pectin in a large pan. Bring to a full boil while stirring. Add sugar, return to boil while stirring. After two minutes do jelly test. When ready, pour in hot jars and seal with lids or paraffin.

Any canning book will give you basics on jelly-making, such as how to perform a jelly test, use clean ingredients, sterilize all jars and lids, and after filling jars, wipe the rims with hot water before sealing.

Unless I'm using small or large baby food jars, I use ½ pint or pint jars with rings and lids. These are processed in a water bath for five minutes after the water boils.

When using nonstandard jars, I paraffin seal. To do this, you wait until the jelly is cool. Carefully wipe any speck of jelly on the surface above the jelly. Melt the paraffin over low heat in a small pan. Pour about an 1/8 inch layer on top of the jelly. Rotate the jar gently so paraffin sticks to the side. Wait two or three days, melt new paraffin, lay a clean string across the old layer so that it extends to the jar lip. Now, with string in place pour a new layer of paraffin, once again rotating to reach the sides. Even if I plan on keeping paraffined jelly for home use I put a cover on it to keep out dust. Δ

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RATTLESNAKE BITE

By Gary F. Arnet, D.D.S.

*While rattlesnakes are an important part of ecosystems and keep down the rodent populations, most people would still rather avoid an encounter. Shown is a Southern Pacific Rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis helleri*). Photo courtesy of Dawn Wilson, PhD and Glen Lubcke, herpetologists at California State University, Chico.*

At about 11:30 a.m. on May 16, 2003, 52-year-old Ron Cooke parked his work truck by the side of the road near Lytle Creek in southern California and walked about 500 yards away, stepping over rocks in a dry riverbed. Stepping on what he thought was a log, he was rapidly bitten twice in the lower leg by a thick-bodied rattlesnake.

Instead of calling 911 (a fire station was just a mile away) he called his employer on a cellular phone for help in locating a hospital. He then drove himself to a hospital 16 miles away and was later transferred to a major university hospital with expertise in snakebites. Alert and conscious when

first admitted to the hospital, he developed neurological symptoms within a few hours and, despite modern medicines and technology, died shortly thereafter from a series of strokes caused by the venom. He left two sons, one who was to graduate from high school a few weeks later.

Although a very serious medical emergency, rattlesnake bites are rarely fatal. Every year, 8,000 poisonous snakebites occur in the United States, many by rattlesnake, with up to 12 deaths reported per year. Many victims recover with permanent damage or deformed extremities.

Rattlesnakes are one of four types of poisonous snakes in the United States, the others being water moc-

casins (cottonmouth), coral snakes, and copperheads. Rattlesnakes are found in all 48 continental states, Canada, and Mexico. No snakes are found in Alaska or Hawaii.

Thirty-two species of rattlesnakes, containing 70 subspecies, have been identified and categorized into two genera: *Crotalus* and *Sistrurus*. In many parts of the country, only one species exists, making identification easy.

In other areas, especially, California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, several species co-exist in the same areas, making identification more important. In some desert areas of southern California where the Mojave rattlesnake that produces

nerve-damaging venom exists with other rattlesnakes that produce hemolytic venom that damages tissue and blood, identification of the species of rattlesnake is important in the treatment. It would be a good idea to know the identification of the poisonous snakes in your area if you spend much time outdoors.

The odds of being bitten

Over 50% of the people bitten by rattlesnakes were trying to handle or kill the snake, and the vast majority of the cases involve the handler being under the influence of alcohol. Maybe not surprising, young men in their late teens and early twenties are most commonly involved with this type of bite.

The rest of the bites are true unexpected accidents that may or may not have been avoidable. Sometimes these bites could have been prevented by a little caution, and by knowing where snakes might be located and their habits.

If you live in the desert there is a good chance you will encounter a rattlesnake. If you live or travel in just about any rural area in the United States you may also run into one. They may be encountered in wild areas, but just as often they are found around homes, gardens, parks, and golf courses. They are everywhere, but are not often seen because they are so cryptic and shy.

Rattlesnakes live in many areas from the seashore to 11,000 feet elevation. They live in deserts, mountains, at the beach, and in forests, prairies, and swamps. And, with so many people moving into rural areas, they also live in our neighborhoods. With so many snakes around, it is amazing there are not more snake-human encounters or more bites. There are more fatalities from lightning strikes (another rare occurrence) in Florida each year than there are fatal snakebites nationwide.

What this also means is that of the thousands and thousands of doctors we have, only a few will have experience treating rattlesnake bites. Thousands may only treat one in a career and most will go an entire career without treating such a patient.

If you receive a rattlesnake bite, a very complex medical problem, the doctor treating you may have very little experience, or you may be the first patient he or she has ever seen. Once a rattlesnake bite occurs, time is of essence. You don't want to wait while your doctor reads up on what to do, or has to find a specialist to call for advice. Better to understand snakes and avoid being bitten in the first place.

Identifying rattlesnakes

Rattlesnakes come in different colors and sizes, yet all have several features that make them easy to identify. While the many species of rattlesnakes vary in location, their appearance, and in the type and

severity of the venom they produce, they have some things in common.

The best way to identify a rattlesnake is by the shape of the head. Non-poisonous snakes have a head, neck, and body that are about the same diameter. They almost appear to be the shape that a child may make when rolling clay.

Rattlesnakes, on the other hand, have a muscular, powerful body, a thin neck, and a distinctive triangular-shaped or arrow-shaped head caused by well-developed poison glands on the side of their head. This applies to rattlesnakes, water moccasins, and copperheads. Other native poisonous snakes, such as coral snakes, and exotic poisonous snakes that have been imported may have thin heads, characteristic of non-poisonous snakes.

Color or patterns on the skin are not a good indicator, as some non-poisonous snakes such as the Pacific Gopher snake and Bull snake have similar rattlesnake-like markings as a defense against enemies. Pupils of



Note the amount of suction caused on the skin when the Sawyer Extractor is used on an arm.



Rattlesnakes, such as this Sidewinder (Crotalus cerastes) have triangular shaped heads and usually have rattles. Their skin pattern is camouflaged to blend in with their environment. Photo courtesy of Dawn Wilson, PhD and Glen Lubcke, herpetologists at California State University, Chico.

rattlesnakes eyes are oval like a cat, rather than round like non-poisonous snakes, but getting close enough to look into their pupils is a good way to get bit in the face.

Rattlesnakes, water moccasins, and copperheads are all pit vipers. That is they have a pit (loreal gland) below their eye used for finding food. Again, you don't want to be close enough to the snake to use this as a method of identification.

Most rattlesnakes have rattles on their tails (one species does not) which they may vibrate when nervous making a characteristic buzzing noise to warn off predators or those getting too close. If surprised, they will strike without first rattling a warning.

Rattles are not always a good indicator to identify a rattlesnake, as they may be absent. Born live (viviparous), rattlesnakes initially have a pre-button, or little knob where rattles will form. Rattles are formed with each successive shedding, which may be several times a year (therefore, you cannot tell the age of a snake by the number of rattles). A young rattlesnake may not have rattles, even

though their bite is still dangerous. Note newborn rattlesnakes are very small and have been found in swimming pools, potted plants, and houses.

Where to expect rattlesnakes

Rattlesnakes may be found almost anywhere. Their value is that they control a large population of rodents, including mice, rats, and rabbits, which would rapidly overpopulate and possibly spread disease if left unchecked. Eighty percent of the diet of rattlesnakes is rodents, although they will also eat ground nesting birds, lizards, and other snakes. It is estimated that they may consume as much as 25% of a rodent population in a given area every year.

Rattlesnakes do not dig their own dens, rather hiding in preexisting structures. They are usually hidden, helped by the natural camouflage pattern on their skin, in areas such as rocks, logs, brush piles, woodpiles, and grass. Often these will be areas also frequented by their prey. They may also take over the burrows of

other snakes or mammals. They are known to wait at one end of a fallen log across a river waiting for prey using the log to cross the river. These are the same logs hikers and backpackers may use to cross. Rattlesnakes may also be found basking in the open, warming in the sun on a rock or log any time of the year. Banks of rivers and edges of lakes are also areas to expect to find them.

As reptiles, rattlesnakes do not generate their own heat, so they need to use the environment to control body temperature. In warm temperatures, such as the desert, they are active from March through October, at first active during the day. As daytime temperatures become hot, they are active at night and spend the day in the shade of a rock, bush, or building. They have been found absolutely everywhere, including in cars and in the shade of tires around airplane wheels. On cool evenings, they are often found lying on concrete or asphalt roads and parking lots, enjoying the retained heat.

Around houses, walkways should be kept clear of brush, rocks, or other hiding places and brightly lit at night. Rattlesnakes are more visible on pavement or barren ground. Eliminate rodents with traps or poisons and fill in their holes, so rattlesnakes do not take them over. Clean up and be careful around woodpiles or junk piles. These are attractive places for rattlesnakes to live, providing shelter and food. Discarded metal sheeting or roofing material lying on the ground is a good spot to expect to find a snake.

The antivenin, which costs about \$450 a vial (at least 10 vials are needed to treat a victim) is not available at every hospital and, at times, is hard for hospitals to obtain. Many hospitals are lucky if they have enough antivenin on hand to treat one snakebite patient.

During cool weather, snakes become inactive. In winter, they will hibernate in protected dens. Some species are known to migrate some distance to return to the same den, with sometimes 50 to 100 snakes hibernating together. Be careful of that area in the spring.

Rattlesnake bites

Most rattlesnakes are very docile unless they are harassed. They will try not to strike, remaining hidden by their location and camouflage color. Given the chance, they will escape rather than strike. However, if harassed or surprised they will strike without warning. They often strike from a coiled position, but they may strike from any position and can strike a distance of one-half to two-thirds of their body length. A six-foot snake can potentially strike you four feet away.

Rattlesnakes locate the presence of warm-blooded prey by finding food with their loreal glands, pits located between their eyes and nostrils, and chemically receptive tongue. They are extremely accurate, even in the total darkness of night.



Non-poisonous snakes have a head, neck, and body that are about the same diameter. They almost appear to be the shape that a child may make when rolling clay.

Venom is injected through two fangs that are thin, gradually tapering cones that are actually elongated and modified maxillary teeth. In larger snakes, they may be up to an inch long. They are attached to the upper jaw and fold back when the mouth is closed. Replacement fangs grow behind the primary fang. A fang will function in an adult rattlesnake for 6 to 10 weeks before being replaced by a reserve fang.

Venom glands located on the side of the jaws, and giving the triangular shape to the head, are pear-shaped and produce and store venom. The compressor glandulae muscle surrounds the gland and causes venom to be ejected through the fangs when needed. The snake will inject its prey with venom and back off until it has had a chance to work, proceeding to follow the wounded prey with its heat sensing ability before swallowing it whole.

As many as 60% of human bites are “dry bites” that contain no venom. The others inject venom that varies by species of rattlesnake. Venoms are often described as either hemotoxic (affecting tissue and blood clotting) or neurotoxic (affecting



Non-poisonous snakes do not have rattles or the distinctive triangular head. Their color pattern may be different than a rattlesnake, as shown by this striped garter snake, or similar, as in the case of gopher or Bull snakes.

the nervous system), but most actually contain many different chemicals that effect blood clotting, interfere with transmissions of nerve impulses, dissolve tissue cells, and specifically target cells of the heart, kidneys, muscles, and other sites.

Preventing bites

Hands, feet, and ankles are the most common locations for rattlesnake bites. Avoiding snakebites is a matter of following a few “do’s and don’ts” when traveling in rattlesnake country.

Do:

- Always hike or camp with someone who can go for help if needed.
- Tell a responsible person where you will be and check in with them.
- Bring a portable phone or other method of communication.
- Carry a Sawyer Extractor if you are going into the wilderness.



This Great Basin Rattlesnake (Crotalus viridis lutosus) is coiled and in strike position. Rattlesnakes can strike up to two-thirds of their body length, four feet for a six foot snake. Note how its coloring camouflages it into the background environment. Photo courtesy of Dawn Wilson, PhD and Glen Lubcke, herpetologists at California State University, Chico.

- Wear hiking boots and long pants.
- Stay on paths where you can see where you are stepping. Avoid heavy grass or underbrush. Make noise with your feet while walking to let snakes know you are around.
- Use a walking stick. A snake may strike it instead of you.
- When stepping over a downed tree, check the other side before stepping.
- Check around rocks, logs, stumps, or rock fences before sitting down.
- Look for concealed snakes before picking up rocks, branches, or firewood.
- Be careful moving boats left on shore for a few hours.
- Teach children to leave snakes alone. Curious children who pick up snakes are often bitten.
- Always leave snakes alone.
- **Don't:**
 - Try to pick up, play with, kill, or otherwise harass a rattlesnake.
 - Tease a rattlesnake to see how far it can strike.
 - Put your hands or feet in places you cannot see, such as reaching down around a log, rock, or bush or reaching up when climbing rocks. Snakes climb walls, rocks, trees and are often at high altitudes.
 - Crawl under fences without first looking under them carefully.
 - Sleep near piles of wood, brush, or trash, at the entrance to a cave, or near swampy areas.
 - Gather firewood after dark.
 - Pick up a stick while swimming; rattlesnakes are good swimmers.

- Underestimate a baby rattlesnake. Although small, they are still deadly.
- Walk at night in snake country without boots and a flashlight.
- Handle freshly killed rattlesnakes; you can still be bitten.
- Keep rattlesnakes as pets. (Why ask for trouble.)

Treatment of rattlesnake bites

A variety of symptoms may develop after a rattlesnake bite. The first are usually pain, swelling, and bleeding at the site and pain, followed by swelling extending up the limb. Nausea, vomiting, sweating, chills, dizziness, weakness, numbness, tingling of the mouth, and changes of pulse or blood pressure may occur, as well as excessive salivation, thirst, swollen eyelids, blurred vision, muscle spasms, bleeding disorders, difficulty breathing, and unconsciousness. Even "dry bites," ones in which no venom was injected, can become painful and infected.

The problem with rattlesnake bites is that, at best, they can cause massive tissue destruction, leaving per-



A Sawyer Extractor is a device available for about \$10 at outdoor stores and is reported to suck some of the venom out of a snakebite wound. It can be easily carried in a first aid kit when hiking through "snake country."

manent disability, or at worst, cause death.

Every rattlesnake bite must be considered a medical emergency and the victim must be taken to a hospital immediately. If they are some distance from a hospital, it is appropriate to transport them by helicopter to a Level 1 Trauma Center. At the hospital, the main treatment will be the use of antivenin, which counteracts the effects of the tissue damaging enzymes in the venom.

The antivenin, which costs about \$450 a vial (at least 10 vials are needed to treat a victim) is not available at every hospital and, at times, is hard for hospitals to obtain. Many hospitals are lucky if they have enough antivenin on hand to treat one snakebite patient.

While many physicians or hospitals are experienced or prepared to treat



Some rattlesnakes protect themselves from the heat by burying their body in the sand under a bush in the desert during the day. This photo shows how hidden and camouflaged the snake is, and is a good example of the characteristic triangular head. Photo courtesy of Dawn Wilson, PhD and Glen Lubcke, herpetologists at California State University, Chico.



Trained herpetologist, Glen Lubcke, studies rattlesnakes, such as this Southern Pacific Rattlesnake, and advises people to never pick up or handle rattlesnakes. Most rattlesnake bites are caused when people "play" with snakes, often while intoxicated. Photo courtesy of Dawn Wilson, PhD and Glen Lubcke, herpetologists at California State University, Chico.

rattlesnake bites, many are not. If bitten, make sure you are taken to a hospital that does know what they are doing and has antivenin on hand. When you get there, ask the physician to contact physician consultants available at a poison control center, a university hospital, or other specialists in treating rattlesnake bites. I know this may sound like you are telling them what to do (and some physician's egos could get bruised), but often as not, the doctor may be in the back room trying to read up on what to do, and advice on where to obtain consultation would be helpful.

First aid

I am not a physician and have not treated rattlesnake bites. The following first aid information is given for general information only and is obtained from what appears to be the common standards listed in first aid books and medical websites, including the snakebite protocol for physicians by Terrance M. Davidson, M.D., Professor of Surgery, University of California, San Diego (www.surgery.ucsd.edu/ENT/Davidson/Snake/Crotalus.htm).

- Move away from the snake to avoid being bitten again. Avoid jumping or running blindly, as there may be other snakes around. Do not try to kill the snake for identification. This wastes time and risks other bites, and the antivenin is the same for all species of rattlesnakes.
- Immediately call for medical help while calming and reassuring the victim. Keep the victim from moving around and ask them to lie flat, preferably with the affected limb lower than the



This young Northern Pacific Rattlesnake (Crotalus viridis oreganos) has not yet developed rattles, but can be distinguished from a non-poisonous snake by its triangular head. It was found warming itself on an asphalt road at sunset, a common spot to find rattlesnakes. Photo by author.

level of the heart. Remove any rings, watches, or bracelets that could cut circulation if swelling occurs.

- If fang marks are present, apply a Sawyer Extractor with the largest cup available over the puncture site to try to remove some of the venom. Place it over at least one of the fang marks, and apply over both if more than one Extractor is available. Leave in place until there is no more drainage from the fang marks. A Sawyer Extractor is a negative pressure syringe reported to suck venom from the wound and widely available for around \$10 at sporting goods and camping stores.
- Immediately wrap a constricting band on the limb just above the site of the bite, between the bite and the heart. This can be some-

thing like an elastic bandage and should be tight enough to block the lymph drainage, but not to constrict blood flow. It should be about the tightness that would be used to wrap a sprained ankle. This is not a tourniquet that is so tight it constricts blood flow and damages tissue. Leave the constricting band in place until the victim is at the hospital where it will be removed after administration of antivenin.

- Continue to reassure victim and treat for shock by having them lie down until medical help arrives.

What not to do

Some treatments for snakebites used in the past actually worsened the injury and are no longer advised. This includes cutting an "X" between the fang marks with a knife or scalpel and applying suction to the fang marks with your mouth. Don't apply hot, cold, or ice to the injured area or place a thin constricting band, such as rope, shoelace, or belt. Avoid strenuous physical activity and don't drink alcohol.

For the number of rattlesnakes in North America and the number of snake-human encounters, the number of rattlesnake bites to humans is low. The problem is that the effect can be catastrophic. Even with excellent, timely care, permanent disability or death can occur. And, given the low number of bites, it is hard to find a physician or hospital that has extensive experience in treating bites, and antivenin is not always available. Your best protection is to understand where to expect rattlesnakes and take precautions to avoid an encounter. Enjoy the outdoors, but be prepared.

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Recycled bicycles

By Brad Rohdenburg

Good bicycles are wonderful things. As you exercise your way to the office or biology class without noise or pollution, they help you lose weight, feel healthier, look better, sleep more soundly, and perhaps live longer. They give you a sense of freedom and self-sufficiency. They might save you money by allowing you to do with one less car. In congested cities they bypass traffic jams, providing not just low-cost mobility but sometimes more mobility than a car.

Their technology is comprehensible to anyone who made it through junior high school. If they aren't left out in the rain too often, they can be maintained for generations with basic hand tools.

They connect you with a fascinating history. Evolving from Velocipedes—toys known as “bone-shakers” to those who rode them over cobblestones—through dangerous high-wheels and “safety bicycles,” they were finally made practical when a Scottish veterinarian named John Dunlop invented pneumatic tires.

By 1895, bicycles as we know them had arrived—ball bearings, chain drives, variable gears, cable controls, and air-filled tires on wheels with wire spokes. Mass production techniques made them affordable, and suddenly the working class had unprecedented mobility, their practical radius as pedestrians multiplied by a factor of about five. Bicycles were well on their way to supplanting horses as personal transportation before they were in turn superseded by the internal combustion engine. Bicycles didn't require pastures, barns or a winter supply of hay and



This aluminum-framed Raleigh showed almost no wear and needed only its rear wheel trued and the rear derailleur adjusted. In many parts of the world it would have been a prized possession.

oats. They didn't kick, bite, or run away. (They still don't kick or bite, but they seem to have learned to run away if you don't keep an eye on them.) Even after the advent of affordable automobiles, bicycles continued to be thought of as utilitarian transportation in much of the world, like the Netherlands and parts of Asia. In wealthy North America, though, they were once again relegated to toy status.

Then during the 1970s, the OPEC oil embargo hit us baby-boomers, and there was a second “bike boom.” Millions of ten-speeds, more properly called road bikes, went into the garages of America. Many of them were of very high quality, and many of them were never ridden much as gas prices came back down and their owners aged.

Nowadays, road bikes are out of fashion and mountain bikes are trendy. But again in the American tradition, they tend to be thought of and designed for sport and recreation

rather than as transportation. People put them on automobile roof racks and drive them places to play in the dirt. The features that make them fun off-road are disadvantages on pavement. Fat tires and knobby treads have greater rolling resistance than thin, slick tires. Upright handlebars permit only one body position, no matter how long the ride or what conditions or winds are encountered. Short wheelbases are uncomfortable and tiring. Shock absorbers and 21-or-more speeds add unnecessary weight to be propelled up hills. Fashionable or not, three-decade-old road bikes will dramatically outperform state-of-the-art mountain bikes on hard-surfaced roads. They are a superior choice for anything but bombing down debris-strewn dirt trails.

There are many other types of bicycles, too, serving many other purposes. The focus of this article will however be very specific: High end 10 and 12-speed road bikes from the

1970s and early 1980s. Such a bike will have drop handlebars and 27-inch wheels, a rear freewheel cluster with five or six sprockets, and will commonly weigh less than 20 pounds.

The basic geometry of these bikes had been established by the time of the first World War. Since then, millions of people have ridden billions of miles, all the while trying to figure out how to reduce weight and increase speed, efficiency, comfort, and reliability. Although the technology was mature well before the 1970s, incremental improvements and refinements have continued. Road bikes being manufactured today have freehubs, with cassettes of seven or more cogs, as opposed to free-wheels with clusters of five or six sprockets. Shifters are now integrated with brake levers. Cables are routed more cleanly and aerodynamically. And rims have gone to the European standard, with metric sizing now being the norm.

Old road bikes are thus outdated as well as out of fashion. They have very little resale value, and dealers are reluctant to even take them in trade. Uncountable multitudes of them are therefore languishing in

garages or basements, or being hauled to landfills. Yet, in some ways, those older bikes are superior to even the newest versions. They tend to have better frame clearance in case you'd like to add fenders or slightly wider, more comfortable tires. Their frames are more likely to have threaded eyelets with which to attach fenders and racks. They were made before liability concerns outweighed common sense and affected the form of things like front forks and bottom brackets. Today's bikes, in a sense, are designed by lawyers.

In 1979 my college graduation present to myself was a 12-speed. I still have it, and it was well-maintained until I was hit by a car fairly recently. (Okay, technically I hit the car, but the end result was the same.) Once my road-rash cleared up, I went to the local bike shop in need of new wheels, fork, brake, and crankset. The proprietor no longer stocked either 27-inch wheels or freewheels, but he let me in on a trade secret: The best place to get those parts is the local dump or at yard sales. He told me that he himself literally threw away about 50 bikes a year. Sure enough, I started looking over the scrap metal pile at the local recycling center on

trash day, and within a few weeks I'd found everything I needed. And the quality was better than that of the originals. Since then I've assembled several more bikes for myself and friends, and one for my daughter to take to college this fall. I've upgraded our components when opportunities presented themselves, too, and collected a cache of spares.

If you're interested in the economic and ecologic sense of alternative transportation and don't already own a bike, this is a chance to experiment without a large investment. If you have an old bike with sentimental value in your attic—a friend that's carried you thousands of happy miles—maybe it's time to put it back in service with upgraded brakes, wheels or drive-train parts. If you already have a nice bike, you might also want a "beater" to ride in the rain, or where theft is a concern. The uglier the better, but it should still be in excellent mechanical order. Re-using is the ultimate form of recycling, and good for everyone concerned.

Now, back to the scrap metal pile: You might get lucky and find a complete bike in good order, but usually parts are missing or damaged—most



*The serial number indicates that this Trek was built in 1983.
It was missing pedals and a saddle.*



A lugged steel frame

often wheels, saddles, and pedals. Grab those whenever you see any worth grabbing. Frames will occasionally be of aluminum, but usually of steel. Avoid cheap welded frames with stamped components. While they can be made rideable, they will never be rewarding and aren't worthy of your time and effort. Good steel frames will be "lugged"—made with sockets that strengthen the joints between tubes, the areas of highest stress. Another quick way to recognize quality is to look at the right crank and "spider"—the starfish-shaped piece that the front chainwheels are bolted to. If they're cast as one piece, it's a decent bike. Look, too, for wheels with alloy rims and stainless spokes. Steel wheels are heavy and unresponsive. (Hey, I think I was married to one of those once) If a bike's frame is the wrong size for you, maybe it's the right size for someone you know. Or maybe the components are worth salvaging.

Give any older bike a thorough going-over. The bearings should be cleaned and repacked with grease. New brake pads are always a good idea. Even if they aren't worn, they harden with age. Replacing cables is usually worthwhile, too. Modern ones have stainless steel wires surrounded by a low-friction liner, conducive to

clean, quick shifting and braking. The handlebars will likely need re-wrapping. Look in used book stores for a repair and maintenance manual with a copyright date in the appropriate date range. While you're at it, get a book or two about how to ride—there's more to it than you might think. The mysteries of adjusting derailleurs and servicing headsets will be solved once you sit down with a book and your bike and follow the procedures step by step. You may feel more comfortable if you dissect a junk bike first, just to see how things work, before you begin on your legitimate restoration project.

Throw away anything that adds useless weight. Those brake extension levers on some bikes, for example. At best, using them will teach you poor riding habits. At their worst, they can be dangerously inefficient. If you prefer straight handlebars and upright brake levers, you can create a hybrid.

If the front derailleur is damaged, save yourself some weight and complexity and do without it. Remove it and one of the front chain rings, and you own a five-speed. Do you really need any more? If you don't have many hills to contend with, consider going all the way to a single speed. This will relieve you of the need for the rear derailleur, all the rear sprockets

but one, and the shift levers and cables. It will save a few additional ounces with a shorter chain, too. A singlespeed is noticeably more efficient than a multispeed in the same gain ratio because of its lighter weight and the lack of drag from derailleur pulleys. There are several websites that will guide you through the process so that you'll end up with the requisite straight chainline.

Another option for a missing or damaged rear wheel is to replace it with one that has a more modern cassette-style freehub. This may involve spreading the stays of the frame to accommodate a wider axle, but it's not rocket science and again there's information on the web.

While I have a generally minimalist philosophy, there are some things that are worth adding to a bike. Locks are an unfortunate necessity. Flat tires are by far the most common mechanical malfunction, so a patch kit and tire levers should be in a small bag under your saddle, and a frame-fitting pump on the seat tube. On a long ride, your hands will appreciate rubber brake hoods. Toe clips are considered obsolete by some, and take some getting used to, but they'll convert the energy you use just to keep your feet on the pedals into forward motion. (Clipless pedals are even better, but require



This Italian-made frame has very high quality lugged, double-butted tubing and Campagnolo components. It was top of the line in its day.



A quick way to recognize quality: If the right crank and "spider"—the starfish-shaped piece that the chainwheels are bolted to—are cast in one piece, it's a decent bike.



Since flat tires are the most common mechanical problem, carry a patch kit, tire levers and a frame-type pump on your bike.

special shoes that you won't want to walk around in at your destination.) A water bottle will fuel you so you can fuel your bike. Lights will keep you visible at night. Those with LED's are remarkably small and efficient. I'm ambivalent about fenders and racks—if they make sense for you, put them on. Small fenders are useless, but full ones will keep you drier and your bike cleaner if you're not just a fair-weather cyclist. If you carry paper-

work or lunch or clothes, a rack will keep your center of gravity lower than a backpack will.

Cyclists tend to be friendly folks who will cheerfully help you. Chances are you already know someone who would be glad to advise you about refurbishing a bike and fitting it to you. Δ

"When I see an adult on a bicycle, I have hope for the human race."

— H.G. Wells

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Make an income raising pet birds



By James McDonald

Parakeets are the most popular pet birds of all time.

Bird raising has been around since the early 1900s and has enabled many people to make a substantial income from a very small piece of property. I know people who make a good living in the pet bird business, as well as many retirees, stay-at-home moms, and others who supplement their yearly income raising these interesting little pets.

In 1974 my wife and I were both working at public jobs. We had been married for several years and knew that at some point we would like to have a family, and both of us wanted her to be able to stay at home and raise the kids, but we knew that we couldn't live off of my income alone.

I knew of two different people in my area that were raising parakeets in small buildings in their backyard. Both had been doing it for a number of years and appeared to me to be doing pretty good at it, since they had expanded during that time. A visit with them was encouraging, and after

several months of serious research, we decided that it was in fact a legitimate business. Since we were animal lovers, we thought it would also be fun as well as profitable.

Our business

We started our bird business on a part time basis in our backyard in 1975 with a small 12 by 18-ft. building that I built myself. By 1976 my wife was doing well enough with the project that we decided to expand the business. We built several more small buildings and the birds continued to do well and she was soon able to quit her job and take care of the birds on a full-time basis. In 1977 our first child was born and she was now the stay-at-home mom that she had always wanted to be.

By 1978 the business was continuing to grow and her income began to exceed mine. I quit my job and we both went full-time with the birds. We expanded into other varieties of pet birds and the business was so



Parakeets grow extremely fast. These are almost ready to leave the nestbox. They are ready to sell at 6 weeks of age.



A colony of parakeets

strong that we simply could not keep up with the demand. I began to recruit others to raise birds for us and

we became a nationwide wholesale distributor of pet birds by 1980.

I hasten to add that the year we started our business, 1975, the U.S. economy went into a recession. The economy also experienced recessions in 1980, 1982, and 1991 as well as the Gulf War in 1991. Some of our strongest growth years were actually during years that our economy was experiencing recession.

In 2000, after 25 years in the business, at the age of 50 we sold our business and retired to the Texas hill country.

People often think that raising birds is confining, and that you are never able to take a vacation. Not so. We always took vacations, usually twice a year. Before we had a helper, we simply had a neighbor come in and feed and water while we were gone. It took him less than an hour a day, and we had a sizeable operation.

The pet industry

The pet industry is a \$31 billion a year business (includes dogs, cats, birds, fish, reptiles, etc. and their feed and supplies) and is growing. The pet industry's spring trade shows had record breaking attendance earlier this year. Pet ownership has increased by 10 million households in the past decade. There are over 8000 individual retail pet shops that sell pet birds.

For many years, wild-caught birds competed with domestic bred birds in the pet business. As a result of the *Wild Bird Conservation Act* passed by Congress, the USDA now limits the amount and types of birds that can be imported into the United States from other countries. This has created an even greater demand for domestically bred pet birds.

Raising birds full time

Pet birds do not reproduce and overpopulate as some animals do. Therefore, in order to supply the pet industry with the millions of birds



A trio of cockatiels

needed annually, they must be intentionally bred.

Raising birds can be done successfully as long as you are located within a four to five hour drive of a major airport. That will allow you to ship your birds by airfreight anywhere in the U.S. Don't worry if you don't live near an area where you will sell lots of birds. We didn't sell *any* birds in our hometown of Corsicana, Texas, and very few in the state of Texas.

Parakeets are by far the most popular of all pet birds, followed by cockatiels, lovebirds, and finches. These are unquestionably the best birds to begin with. They are virtually odorless and attract no insects.

Parakeets, cockatiels, lovebirds, and finches will breed 12 months out of the year if they are provided with the right environment. Building requirements will vary, depending on your geographical location. The ideal temperature range for maximum production is between 55 and 85 degrees.

Colonies vs. cages

Colony breeding is simply where a group of birds are bred in a colony or pen, and cage breeding is where you have one pair of birds per cage. General recommended space requirements are as follows for colony breeding:

- Parakeets: 1 square foot of floor space per bird
- Cockatiels: 5 square feet of floor space per bird
- Lovebirds: 1½ square feet of floor space per bird
- Zebra finches: 6/10 square feet of floor space per bird

Cage breeding will usually allow more birds in a given area than will colony breeding, because the cages are stackable. Cage breeding will also allow more control over the colors of birds produced and record keeping is more accurate. Automatic watering systems and self-feeders are also available for either method of breeding and really simplify a bird operation.

Feeding

The birds eat a basic seed diet, along with vitamin/mineral supplements. Because these birds eat dry seeds and drink only a small amount of water, their stool is almost dry by the time it hits the ground, resulting in virtually no odor at all.



A pair of cockatiels in the nestbox



Zebra finches



Lovebirds

Breeding

These birds reach sexual maturity between 4 to 8-months of age, and will produce for 3 to 10 years, depending on the species. One should only purchase breed stock from reputable breeders who know what they are doing. When dealing with pet birds, you should expect some losses just as with other types of fowl. Veterinary care is basically like it is with chickens; it's simply not an issue.

The adult birds raise their babies in their own nestboxes, therefore you do



A nice cage breeding operation

not need to buy expensive incubators and other equipment. These birds will average from 4 to 6 babies per clutch and average 4 to 6 clutches per year.

Marketing

Most breeders sell to wholesale buyers, who in turn will ship them to pet shops nationwide. Others sell directly to the pet shops, or even retail them themselves at various markets. However, wholesaling them is by far the easiest, especially if you have a volume of birds.

The pet industry desires young birds or animals, which means that you are able to sell the offspring as soon as they are weaned. Weaning ages will vary according to the species, but ranges from 6 to 12 weeks of age. Since you don't sell the offspring by the pound as you do with many forms of livestock, the profits on the baby birds can be very good.

Wholesale prices range from around \$3 on zebra finches to \$30 on cockatiels. I know many part-time operators who have made from \$500 to \$2000 monthly, while full-breeders can make much higher incomes.

I would not consider myself an above average person in intelligence or ability, yet I was

able to succeed and do extremely well in this business. The bird business allowed us the opportunity to work at home, make an extremely good living, send our boys through college, and take an early retirement.

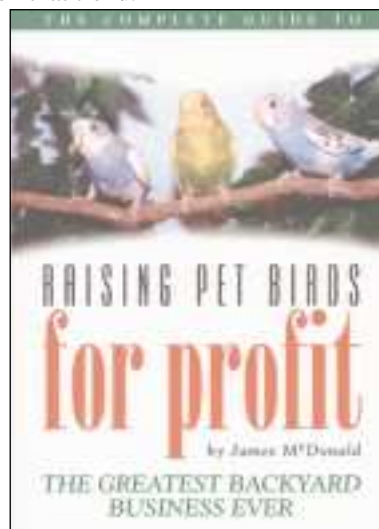
The large numbers of birds sold annually in the United States speaks for themselves. It has been around since the early 1900s, through good times and bad, and its future looks as good as ever. Δ

Book review

Raising Pet Birds for Profit

The Complete Guide To Raising Pet Birds For Profit, The Greatest Backyard Business Ever, by James McDonald. Brentwood, 2003. 254pp.

Animal lovers and income seekers alike will enjoy reading "The Complete Guide To Raising Pet Birds For Profit, The Greatest Backyard Business Ever." Over \$31 billion is spent annually on pets, feed, and pet supplies in the U.S. The statistics show that we are a nation of pet lovers as the pet industry continues to grow year after year regardless of economic times. This book was written for those who wish to capitalize on that trend.



A very nice building used to breed parakeets and cockatiels. This building is designed to let the birds fly outside when the weather is nice.

Safety

I used to watch them
In the pond across the street
Swimming over the water's surface.
Those autumn days that were turning into winter.
Ducks, swimming with purpose
Like a feathered flotilla.
I could see them from my window
As they chased quarry
That sought safety below the water.
The ducks would dive
Holding their breaths,
Pursuing their prey
Beneath the surface,
Reappearing somewhere else in the pond.
The weather was good and their life was good.
They mated and nested and fed on the bounty of the pond.

In the evening they would float in their sleep
Far from the shore,
Safe from predators,
And I soon came to envy their simple existence.
And I'd lay in bed
After a last look out the window.
I, who had errands and responsibilities and worries,
Envied the trouble-free existence of a duck.

One morning I awoke,
Drawn to the window by a clamor
And looked out to see that
In the night
It had frozen over,
And the ducks,
Caught unaware in their slumbers,
Were held fast by the unforgiving ice.
I glanced at the thermometer and knew that
Surely, by midday, their bonds would have melted.
But their attention seemed fixed upon something else

And from the far end of the pond
A fox was walking nervously across the new surface
While the ducks struggled against their icy chains.
The fox, pausing here and there to test the air,
Cautiously approached one, then the other,
And as he reached each
He deliberately bit its head off.
It was in my power to intervene
As I watched.

But, when I could no longer look
I lay back in my bed beside my partner
And listened to her soft breathing.

- John Silveira
Gold Beach, OR

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While there are other books written on the subject of pet birds, most were written for the person keeping a bird or so for a pet. This book was written for the person that not only enjoys working with animals, but wants to make an income while doing so.

It has a practical, easy to understand style that enables the reader to benefit from McDonald's 25 years of experience, and it covers the four most popular species of pet birds: parakeets, cockatiels, lovebirds, finches. It details why the demand is so strong, the different ways to breed the birds, housing requirements, ways to increase production, nationwide marketing, and shipping techniques. The book includes over 90 pictures and illustrations.

\$39.95 plus \$3.95 shipping from Brentwood House Publishing, P.O. Box 291992-BW, Kerrville, Texas 78029 Phone 830-895-5864 or www.petbirdincome.com.

— Lou Gillian, Century Pet News

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Cultured milk

Food of centenarians

By Edna Manning

Cultured milk products have been enjoyed in the Middle East, Europe, and parts of Asia for centuries. The Greeks felt that yogurt had therapeutic qualities for diseases caused by intestinal disorders. Bulgarians attribute their good health and longevity in part to their daily intake of cultured milk products.

The most common of the cultured milk products are yogurt, kefir, piima, buttermilk, and quark or cottage cheese.

Yogurt is simply milk thickened to a custard consistency by certain acid-forming bacteria growing in it. The special bacteria that turn milk into yogurt are *lactobacillus bulgaricus*, *lactobacillus acidophilus*, and *streptococcus thermophilus*. The coagulation and the fermentation of milk sugar into lactic acid is caused by these bacteria. This action curdles the protein in yogurt and acts as a preservative.

The bacteria in yogurt have already begun to break down the protein molecules into lactic acid, making it easy for the body to assimilate. Thus yogurt is helpful for people who have lactose intolerance, because they lack an enzyme that helps to digest milk sugar in regular milk. Yogurt helps the digestion process to move along smoothly and quickly.

In the Near East, babies are frequently fed yogurt for two or three months after they are weaned. Breast fed babies receive *bacillus bifidus*, a

bacteria similar to *lactobacillus bulgaricus* found in yogurt.

Some doctors prescribe yogurt to replace normal intestinal flora that are destroyed when oral antibiotics have been used for an extended period of time. Antibiotics destroy



Yogurt makes a light and tasty dessert with a few strawberries added for color and flavor.

“good” bacteria along with the “bad” bacteria.

Studies show that yogurt can be helpful in lowering the cholesterol levels in the blood by decreasing the



amount of cholesterol the body produces.

Research would also indicate that the bacteria in yogurt can help guard the intestinal tract for carcinogens.

Yogurt has also been used to aid in the healing of ulcers, digestive disorders, yeast infections, and nervous fatigue.

Yogurt is also used in cosmetics such as face masks and body lotions.

Commercial yogurt can be purchased in any supermarket. It comes in a variety of flavors and brands, many with low butterfat content.

Yogurt can be made from any kind of milk, including soy milk. The flavor will vary with the type of milk used.

Yogurt is not complicated to make yourself. Only two ingredients are necessary: milk and a starter culture. Use fresh whole or skim milk, powdered milk, or a combination. Adding a third of a cup of dry milk to a quart of skim milk will produce a more firm, nutritious yogurt.

Starter cultures for cultured milk can be purchased at Health Food Stores. You can also purchase a container of plain yogurt for your starter.

Dried starter will keep for several months in a cool place. If you use yogurt as a starter, you will have to buy a fresh supply every once in a while, as the bacteria strain tends to weaken after a time. Whenever it begins to take longer to set, buy a fresh starter.

The next step in yogurt making is the heating and cooling of the milk.

First sterilize all the utensils you will use with boiling water. Then heat one quart of pasteurized milk to a temperature of 105 to 110 degrees F. If you're using raw unpasteurized milk, heat it first to 180 degrees F, then allow to cool to 110 degrees F. Stir in a couple of tablespoons of commercial yogurt into 1 cup of your prepared milk and add this to your remaining milk and mix well. If you use a powdered starter, follow the directions on the package.

Pour milk into sterilized jars or small plastic containers. (Use small containers as yogurt tends to separate and get watery on top once some of it has been used.) Cover the containers.

Incubation is the next step. This can be done by using a yogurt maker or any warm place where the temperature can be kept at 110-115 degrees F. My favorite method is to simply use the oven with only a 40 watt light bulb on.

Yogurt can take from six to ten hours to incubate. Check periodically to see if it has set to the proper consistency. It should be smooth, have a mild flavor, and be slightly tart. You can obtain either a mild or a more tangy yogurt by adjusting the incubation period. The longer it is incubated, the tangier the results.

Refrigerate immediately. It will keep for up to two weeks. If whey forms on the top, pour it off. Remember to save a few tablespoons for your next batch.

Kefir is similar to yogurt, but has yeast cells present causing fermentation, thus producing a drink that is slightly alcoholic and effervescent. The flavor is sweeter and milder.

To make kefir, simply add culture (kefir grains, the fermenting agent) to raw milk and incubate at room temperature for 12 to 24 hours. Pour through a sieve, reserving the kefir grains for the next batch. Serve chilled.

Blend with fresh fruit to make a delicious drink.

Piima is a Scandinavian cultured milk product. It is milder than either yogurt or kefir and very easy to make. Simply stir your culture into pasteurized milk at room temperature. Allow to incubate for 8 to 24 hours.

Buttermilk is really the liquid left from butter making. The "buttermilk" found in stores is a cultured milk made from pasteurized skim milk. Lactic acid bacteria is added to the milk and the mixture is left to clabber at room temperature.

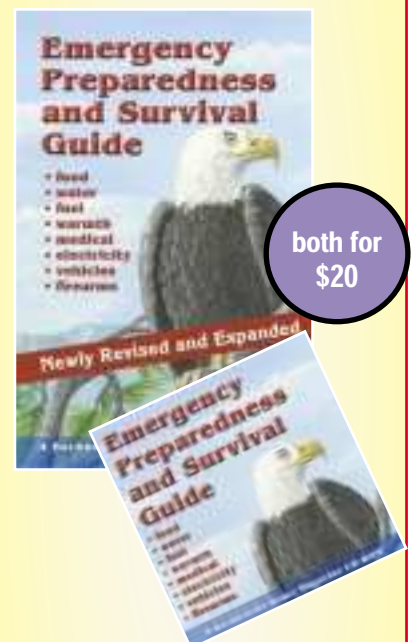
Homemade buttermilk can be made by adding a culture to pasteurized milk or, if you make your own butter, from pasteurized real buttermilk.

Quark or **Cottage cheese** is also easy to make from raw, unpasteurized milk. The milk can be poured into a large cooking pot, covered and left to incubate in a warm place (about 80 degrees F—again, I use the oven with a light bulb on). After about 24 hours the milk has thickened. At this point, heat the clabbered milk slowly at a very low temperature, stirring gently on occasion to separate the curds from the whey. In about 40 minutes, the curds will have shrunk. Hold temperature at 120 degrees for about 15 minutes until the curds feel firm but not rubbery. You can now ladle the curds into a colander and drain the whey. The whey is rich in B vitamins and can be used in baking.

Beatrice Trum Hunter's, *Fact/Book on Yogurt, Kefir and Other Milk Cultures* is a practical, informative book on the benefits of cultured milk which includes a variety of easy to make recipes. Check your local library. Δ

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Thorne Bay, Alaska

(This is part of a series on "Small Town America." If you'd like to write about your small town, send your article to *Backwoods Home Magazine*, PO Box 712, Gold Beach, OR 97444. — Editor)

By Jon Stram

Three weeks in Thorne Bay, Alaska, working on our cabin, relaxing with our friends, and just generally living life the way it was meant to be lived, were over for another six months. My wife, Juanita, my youngest daughter, Jamie, and I had been working on planing and grooving a load of red cedar boards in preparation for paneling the inside of our cozy 16 x 20 cabin. We wired for electricity, added on a carport/covered work area, and kept ourselves so busy that we only took one day out for salmon fishing. Still, catching a nice 12-pound silver salmon on your first cast of the day is not a bad way to remember your fishing time.

The sight of Jack, our young chocolate Labrador, chasing pink salmon through the shallows of Gravelly Creek and proudly presenting me with one live salmon after another is

a picture I'll never forget. Of course, as soon as he'd head back out for another salmon, I'd toss the almost spawned-out salmon back into the creek to complete its journey. Pinks in the final stages of spawning aren't exactly gourmet fare.

The beauty and bounty of Alaska, after all these years, still overwhelms me. Hills are covered in hemlock, red

Dungeness crab and clam for the taking, so numerous that you can fill a bucket in 10 to 15 minutes. Sitka blacktail deer seemingly around the corner of every bend in the road, and the numerous black bear, appearing and disappearing as they gorge on salmon and berries, preparing for the possibility of a long, cold winter.

The bittersweet thoughts of heading back home to the Lower 48 filled my mind as I lay on my sleeping bag and pad on the hard, plastic cots that the Alaska Ferry System so thoughtfully provides for us low-budget travelers. I was already missing my good friends, Ernie and Margie, Earl and Chris, Bill, Wally, Bud, and so many others. It's always so hard to leave, and this time was no different. The prospect of once again entering Civilization (a misnomer to put it gently) was none too inviting. It was

the morning of September 11, 2001. Little did I know at the time how truly uninviting it would soon turn out to be.

The people

Wonderful as the environment is, the best part about Thorne Bay are the people and the sense of communi-



and yellow cedar, and spruce trees. Blueberries, huckleberries, salmonberries, and currants compete for every square inch of space. Streams so full of spawning salmon—pinks, silvers, chum, and sockeye—that at times you can't retrieve a lure through them without snagging one or more with every cast.



View of Thorne Bay, some float buildings, and the School District Office Floathouse from "The Port"

ty you get living here. You can't live here long before you recognize everyone by the vehicles they drive, and everyone you pass on the road gives you a wave. You can't walk down the road with a gas can in hand before the first person passing by will ask if you need a ride or some help. With only one grocery store, two gas stations, two sporting goods and general hardware stores it doesn't take long before you know every merchant in town personally, and yet you'll find that you rarely need to leave town to get a necessary service or supply. If you really want to get to know some of Thorne Bay's residents quickly, just stop by the *Thorne Bay Community Church* any Sunday morning about 10:30, and you'll be surrounded by a group of some of the friendliest people you'll ever meet, and you'll probably have an invitation for lunch, even if it isn't Potluck Sunday. If for some reason you don't get a lunch invite, just stop by *Dale's Pizza* or *Someplace to Go* for a homemade

burger and fries. No *McDonald's* here.

Thorne Bay, Alaska, is located on the east side of Prince of Wales Island, in Southeast Alaska, near the town of Ketchikan. You can get to Ketchikan via Alaska Airlines, a one and a half hour flight from Seattle. From Ketchikan you can then hop aboard a float plane for the half hour flight to Prince of Wales Island, or you can take a two and a half hour ferry ride to Hollis, on Prince of Wales Island. You can also drive and ferry from Down South, either getting on the ferry at Bellingham, Washington, or Prince Rupert, British Columbia.

Prince of Wales Island is the third largest island in the United States, over 90 miles long, 40 miles wide, and with a 1,500+ mile road system. It is sparsely populated with under 5,000 people. Craig, Klawock, Hollis, Hydaburg, Kasaan, Coffman Cove, Whale Pass, Point Baker, Naukati, and Thorne Bay are the main towns

on the island, with anywhere from 40 to 1,500 per town. In the recent past, most of the employment has been timber based, and with the current downturn in lumber prices and slowdown in logging activity, the overall island economy is quite depressed. Don't let that depress you, though. There's still plenty of opportunity for the innovative backwoods home person with a few skills and an active imagination.

Advantages

Let me just give you an idea of some of the advantages of life on Prince of Wales Island, especially in Thorne Bay. First off, Alaska has no state income tax, no state property tax, and no state sales tax. That's right. None. Vehicle registration fees will be under \$100 per year for the average vehicle. To make the situation even better, Alaska has a unique thing called the *Permanent Fund Dividend*, where the state actually pays each individual in each family



"Some Place to Go," a small walk-up fast food restaurant in Thorne Bay

who lives there, just to live there. In 2001 the dividend was \$1850.28, which meant a family of four received \$7405.12. In 2002 the dividend was \$1540.76 and a family of four received \$6103.04 in about October or November of 2002. If you are careful and creative, you can stretch that out quite a ways.

Every Alaskan resident is also allowed up to 10,000 board feet of personal use wood that can be harvested off of National Forest lands with a free permit from the Forest Service. Eighty-five percent of Prince of Wales Island is National Forest, and there are numerous small mills around the island that will help you cut, haul, and mill your wood into lumber, and then deliver it to your building site. It doesn't take much to get all the lumber you'd need to build a house or cabin and all the outbuildings you could want. You'll have to see the quality of the raw lumber you'll get: red and yellow cedar, spruce, and hemlock. You'll never want to buy Down South lumber again.

If you haven't been to Southeast Alaska, you probably think about Alaska as the land of snow and ice. That's a common misconception.

There's a good reason for the fact that most of the residents of Prince of Wales come from Oregon, Washington, and Montana. The weather is not that much different from what they're used to. Prince of Wales is technically a rain forest, and being an island on the Inside Passage, it has a coastal climate. It has an average wintertime low of only 32° F, summertime highs into the 70s and low 80s, and average yearly rainfall in the 150 to 200 inch range. If you can't stand clouds and rain, don't come to

Prince of Wales. Winters will range from mild, with very little snow and freezing weather, to mildly severe, with snow accumulations from November to March and freezing temperatures.

One difference you'll notice on Prince of Wales Island is the absence of small cars and sedans. Ninety-five percent of the vehicles on the island are pickups, Suburbans, and SUVs. While a decent two-wheel drive vehicle will get you around on any of the gravel roads on the island nine months out of the year, the roads do tend to be rough and a little hard on your suspension and spinal column. Be sure to stay on the roads, though, because if you get off into the muskeg, you'll need to be winched out. A good four-wheel drive vehicle and chains will get you around fine in all but the very worst winter weather. The state is currently paving the main roads from Hollis to Hydaburg to Craig, Thorne Bay, and Coffman Cove. Within a couple years or so, you'll be able to travel to most of the major destinations on the island without getting off of pavement, unless you take one of the numerous side rides to hunt, fish, explore, or cut firewood.

The topsoil on Prince of Wales is very shallow, as the island is basically a big rock with a huge network of caves underneath its surface. We have a growing season that usually starts in mid-April, running through September or October. You'll need to build up your soil, and a lot of residents either have tire gardens, raised beds, or greenhouses for their produce.

There is no pasture on the island, which explains why you'll see no horses or cattle on the island. You could probably raise poultry or goats, but you'll need to think about protection from both the elements and the local black bear and wolf population. Prince of Wales Island has no brown or grizzly bears and no moose or caribou population.

Hunting and fishing

However, if you're a hunter or fisherman, Prince of Wales Island is a paradise. Residents are allowed to



Jamie Stram works with a pocket knife, removing slivers of wood from the edges of cedar interior boards after grooving edges with the table saw.

harvest two black bear per year, with the black bear hunting season open 10 months out of the year, September through June.

Four deer are allowed per person per year, with deer hunting season running five months, August through September. There is no cost for either deer or black bear tags for residents.

Waterfowl season runs from September until the end of the year, and sometimes extends into January.

Fur trapping in the winter is also an option. For most of the big game hunting, there are very few weapons restrictions, and you can use archery gear, crossbow, shotgun, rifle, handgun, or muzzle loader. Separate seasons for bow hunters, rifle hunters, handgun hunters, or muzzle loader hunters just aren't a fact of life on Prince of Wales.

July is the only month of the year without a big game hunting season going on, and since most residents carry rifles, shotguns, or handguns in their vehicles most of the time, our *Second Amendment* right to "Keep and Bear Arms" is pretty much taken for granted. I've never been questioned for carrying any combination of firearms, bows, or fishing tackle.

Fishing is almost endless: winter steelhead for the hardy fisherman, with trout fishing starting up in the early spring. Chinook fishing starts up in May, quickly followed by sock-eye, pink, chum, and silver salmon. Halibut, bottom fish, crab, and clam are available year-round, weather conditions permitting.

You'll definitely want a boat and motor if you live on Prince of Wales, but it doesn't have to be a big one to start out with. Thorne Bay is on the inside of the Inside Passage, and if the weather and wind isn't kicking up, the bay and ocean will often be as flat and calm as a farm pond.

Alternative energy

For the most part, if you live in any of the rural areas, you can use about any form of alternative energy you'd

like, as alternative energy is a way of life in most of Alaska. Solar power isn't real popular on Prince of Wales though, since sometimes we don't see the sun for weeks on end.

In most of the towns on Prince of Wales, water, sewer, and electricity will be available if you live within town.

Outside of town is a different story, though. Electric lines are slowly spreading to some of the rural areas on the island, with South Side Thorne Bay only getting electricity within the past few years. In the populated rural areas on the island, the steady drone of generators is a common sound.

Thorne Bay is gradually getting quieter as more and more people get on the electric power grid. The average electric bill for our cabin is only about \$20 per month, but we still keep the generator for backup power, as do most of the local residents.

Utilities

Outhouses are much in evidence, as sewer lines are only available in



Jamie's friend, Sunshine, plays on the computer next to the refrigerator in the living room/kitchen/dining room in our cabin.

town, and you will need to get a permit to put a septic system or drain field on your rural property. They do have regulations on that.

No one drills wells on the island, but freshwater springs are common on most pieces of property and most rural dwellings also use a rain catchment system, water storage tank, and filter system to take care of their water needs. With 150 to 200 inches of rain per year on the average, most people keep their storage tanks pretty full. You just need to match the size storage tank to your family size and expected water usage. You can still drain gray water directly into the soil, but you'll need to make other plans for your toilet facilities and black water, unless you live in town on an existing sewer line. Don't expect to ever be provided with a public sewer system if you live in a rural area on the island. Ain't gonna happen.

Most areas have phone service, either via land line, radio phones, or cell phones. Phone service is getting better year by year. Internet service is still pretty spotty, but I'm sure that will get better over time, as comput-



Juanita sharpens a chainsaw on the front porch of our cabin-in-progress.

ers and the Internet are still the wave of the future, even in rural Alaska. And you can always get satellite internet service. However, there are still a lot of residents who don't have phones, often by choice, and Citizen Band Radio systems are still quite common in both residences and vehicles. Getting hold of some of the local residents can be quite interesting and involved at times.

Building

There are several common ways to obtain buildable property on Prince of Wales Island. You can check with one of the local realtors, such *Gateway City Realty* at (907) 826-3640, or *Prince of Wales Island Realty* at (907) 826-2927, or on the Internet at www.ktn.net/powr and email at powir@aptalaska.net. At times, you can still purchase land by sealed bid auction through either the *University of Alaska*, www.ualand.com or the *Alaska Mental Health Trust Fund*, www.dnr.state.ak.us/mhtlo. There are usually several houses and pieces of property available for sale by owner, and to find these you either need to know someone who lives there and is knowledgeable about property for sale, or you need to just start driving around looking for the "for sale" signs. There are bulletin boards at

most of the grocery stores, gas stations, and other gathering places on the island, and that's where most of the local residents advertise and find out what is available and from whom. You can also look in the Classifieds in the *Island News*, the local newspaper. The address for the *Island News* is P. O. Box 19430, Thorne Bay, Alaska 99919; their phone number is (907) 828-3420; their email address is islnews@aptalaska.net.

You can reach the Prince of Wales Chamber of Commerce for a multitude of information. Their phone number is (907) 826-3870; fax number is (907) 826-5467; email is powcc@aptalaska.net; web site is www.prince-of-walescoc.org; and their address is: P. O. Box 497, Craig, AK 99921. They should have Forest Service Road Maps available, too.

Currently, most of the island doesn't require building permits or inspections for private homes and cabins, and there is no building code to follow. If you want to live in a trailer initially and add on a wannigan, no problem. The drawback is, if you want to buy an existing home, you'll need to check it out carefully, and you'll probably have a more difficult time arranging any bank financing. Most likely, though, you'll probably just have to work out a deal with the owner on a private contract. Just be careful.

We've built our cabin with lumber milled locally, mostly red cedar, and most of the material was either given to us, bought used, or bartered for. We have less than \$2,000 cash into the entire 16 by 20-



Using typical transportation for Thorne Bay, Jon Stram rides in his 17-foot boat with 6-horsepower motor.

foot cabin—2 bedrooms, loft area, bathroom, kitchen, living room, utility and storage room, front porch, and a carport/covered outside work area. We have all the comforts of home that we want: wood stove, washer, dryer, propane stove, refrigerator, freezer, smoker, etc. A green metal roof, red cedar board and bat exterior siding, and planed red cedar interior paneling pretty much finish off the cabin the way we like it. The 4.2 acres were paid for by trading some used vehicles, paying some cash over time, and assuming a small bank loan, for about \$20,000 total. That's another story, for another time. Δ

(Jon Stram sells an informational CD about Prince of Wales Island for \$12.50. Send payment to Jon Stram, 103 Foothills Dr., Newberg, OR 97132. Phone: (503) 538-5145. email: castaway@gte.net)



Bill Ingles and Jon Stram, on the front porch of the cabin, plane 1"x6"x8' red cedar boards for the cabin's interior.

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Woolen winter mittens in minutes

By Anita Evangelista

There's nothing so comfy and warm in the snowy dead-of-winter as a pair of thick, soft woolen mittens. Many of us have fond childhood memories of a favorite pair that accompanied us out to play or to collect firewood. Wool makes one of the warmest and most sturdy winter fibers, is a renewable resource and, with basic care, can last literally for decades.

But really nice woolen mittens can set us back a significant sum or take quite a few nights to knit from scratch.

There's another way to acquire these beauties. It only calls for basic stitchery skills and a few cast-off garments. It takes less than an hour to put a pair together. And they can be attractive enough to be given as holiday gifts.

The first step is to locate a wool sweater—a favorite one that has gone past its prime, or one that accidentally went through a hot-water cycle in the washing machine. Our local small town has a thrift store which routinely carries wool sweaters in all colors and sizes, with lots of choices in style and texture. Your town probably does too. You can also find good buys at garage sales. Choose only pure wool sweaters for this project. These garments will have the famous overlapping circles “wool mark” on the label. Of course, you can make mittens from any fabric, although cotton ones simply will not keep your hands warm, and wool mixed with other

fibers (such as polyester or Angora rabbit) won't be as durable.

The blue men's large-size wool sweater shown below ended up in the washer and super-hot dryer, which resulted in the garment shrinking, as wool will do, down to a child-size item. The arms of this sweater, however, had been stuffed with socks (don't ask!), so they retained their



This formerly large men's sweater shrank and felted while being washed and dried. The torso area wool is thick and firm.

bulky shape throughout the process. The final outcome was very heavy, sturdy semi-felted wool on the trunk, and loose, airy wool on the arms.

The thick, stiff fabric that occurs when wool is heated and agitated, such as in a washer or dryer, is actually a desirable product if you want the equivalent of “boiled wool.” Boiled wool was used during the Middle Ages as a type of poor-man's armor: it was thick and durable enough to protect wearers against arrows and knife attacks. Today, the wool industry in France knits beautiful super-large berets and vests, then boils them until they felt and shrink into normal-sized hardy, warm, boiled wool garments.

So, although this favorite blue sweater is past the point where it can be used as a sweater again, it can still be converted into mittens, one “light-weight” pair from the sleeves, and one super heavy “boiled wool” pair from the body.

The second step is to make a pattern of your hand, or the hand of the person who will receive the mittens.

Place your hand on a sheet of paper, fingers together and thumb extending to the side, with wrist extending straight (rather than angled to one side). Now, using a pencil, trace around your hand. Keep the pencil vertical (upright) as you trace. This will help keep the hem area consistent. When you're done, you'll have a pretty clear outline of your hand.

Next, soften the outline and round it out into a true “mitten” shape. Then add about ½ inch to the edge, all the way around. This will allow for the hem. Now, trim the pattern out of the paper, and make a duplicate pattern, so that you'll have one for each hand.

The third step is to lay the two patterns onto the sweater. Turn the



The drawn outline follows the form of the hand.

sweater inside-out first. You can use either the body portion of the sweater or the arms, or both, if you're making two pairs of mittens. Leave the cuff edges on to act as cuffs on your mittens-to-be. Pin the patterns in place temporarily, passing your pins through both thicknesses of the sweater. If you use the sweater's arms, lay the pattern so that the "pinky side" of your pattern is against the arm seam. This will reduce the amount of sewing you'll have to do.

The fourth step is to mark around the edge of the pattern, leaving a clear outline on the sweater. I used a black indelible marker pen to outline my patterns on this blue fabric, but chalk or a wax marker may work just as well. Carefully remove the pattern, and pin the two layers of fabric together again. Now, trim around the pattern mark line, leaving the side-seam intact. The trimmed fabric edges may have a tendency to unravel a little bit at this point. You may wish to use your marker to draw a "sewing line" about ½ inch in from the cut edge. That's where you'll sew the pieces together.



The drawn outline has been "enlarged" by adding a ½-inch wide strip which will allow for a seam area when the mitten is sewn together.

The fifth step is to sew the mitten seam, about ½ inch in from the cut edge. If you're handy or so inclined, you can use a running slip stitch to catch and hold the cut edge down (the same style as the arm seam on the sweater). Plain cotton-polyester thread works fine for this, but for more fancy mittens you could use a lightweight worsted wool yarn in a contrasting color. I've sewed mittens using dental floss and probably fishing line would work as well. The thread should just be sturdy enough to hold the weight of the fabric firmly together.



Edges lined up and stitching has begun.



Mitten on the left has been sewn and turned right-side-out. Notice that it is smaller than the cut pieces on the right which haven't been sewn yet.



Mitten patterns laid on the sweater body. Notice that the edge of the cuff area has been marked with dotted lines on one pattern.

The final step is to turn the mitten right-side-out, and try it on. If it seems too loose, you can turn it inside-out again and sew a new seam portion to tighten up the floppy areas. You're done!

If you wish, you can sew additional designs, initials, or patterns in contrasting colors onto the back of the new mittens, or run a colored yarn around the cuff end. That will take a bit longer, but the result is a very personalized one-of-a-kind item.

Mitten care is simple: wash in lukewarm water using a mild shampoo or liquid dish detergent. Rinse in lukewarm water, carefully press out the excess liquid without twisting, and dry flat. Or, if you made your mittens extra-large to start with, just toss them in the washer, dry in a hot tumbling dryer, and take out a child-size pair of boiled mittens. Δ



Mitten is done and it fits like a toasty warm glove.

Hey! Sandwichman!

Selling sandwiches for an income

By Donn Rochlin

There's a saying in Sedona: "The surest way to make a million dollars in Sedona is to move there with a million dollars. Well according to my experience that turned out to be true with money in general, but the decision to move to the beautiful and seductive red rocks of Sedona, Arizona, turned out to be one of the greatest experiences of my life.

Not knowing quite what to expect in making the transition from the "hubbub" of Fresno, California, and having been born and raised in Los Angeles, I was about to embark on an entirely new and challenging life change. Imagine, a town with only one stop light, one movie theater, two markets, and a main street you could hear a pin drop on after 9 p.m.

Even in the light of this major downsizing now going on in my life, I remember thinking, "With my background in sales and marketing it shouldn't be any problem to get a well paying job."

Well, rude awakening #1: *No jobs*. With no savings or finances to fall back on, the financial realities of living in a small town started to set in. After months of scraping up odd jobs (hodding bricks, singing telegrams, landscape helper, housecleaning, and even washing dishes), I had had it.

I remember laying in my bed staring at the ceiling and thinking, "There's got to be something I can do to show this town and myself, I'm here to stay. I'm not going to be one of the financial casualties forced to

abandon my dream of living where I want."

Interestingly enough, it happened to be the day after Thanksgiving and I started to think about all that leftover turkey and how for weeks after the feast my family would live on it (turkey soup, turkey sandwiches, etc.).

I started reminiscing back to years ago, in Los Angeles, when my wife came up with a



great idea to deliver snacks to employees who worked the graveyard shift at several of the convalescent hospitals in our area. Having once worked at one of them, she knew that it was difficult for them to find anyplace to eat at that hour of the morning. She prepared some sandwiches and various snacks and hit the streets. Even though it provided a little extra income, the business was short lived, as she got weary of getting up at midnight every night.

So here it is, at least six years later, and as I'm laying there a light goes on: "That's it! I'll start a lunch delivery service."

I jumped out of bed and called a friend of mine who I thought of because of her culinary talents. I told

her about my idea. The next morning we appraised the leftover turkey and agreed we could get 12 to 15 sandwiches out of it. I said "Let's do it. You make 'em and I'll sell 'em."

When I arrived at her apartment the next morning, I was amazed. She had worked her magic. I mean these were the most beautiful sandwiches in the world, three inches high with crispy lettuce, bright red fresh tomatoes, mayonnaise and spices, and everything a turkey sandwich is about. We decided to charge \$3.75.

"People will go crazy," I predicted.

I loaded the beauties into my cooler and headed out into the winter frost at 9 a.m. I walked into any business showing signs of life and announced myself.

"Hi. I'm the Sandwichman. We're a new lunch delivery service in town. Would you like to be included on our daily route?"

From that day on, I rarely heard a no. I returned three hours later with nothing more than crumbs in my cooler.

Needless to say it was the beginning of a lot of fun, a profitable business, and a genuine service to the community. Each day we'd add a few more sandwiches to the cooler.

About four weeks into our enterprise, and with steady growth on the horizon, we decided we'd better get legal. We were definitely going to outgrow our apartment kitchen, not to mention the attention we'd soon draw from the health department.

Before securing the necessary permits we would need an approved commercial kitchen. It needed to be something affordable and available to us every morning at 5 a.m. I came up

with the idea of contacting the local Elks Lodge. They only used their kitchen for special events and never early in the morning. It was perfect.

We struck a deal with them and set up production. With our permits in order, we now qualified to purchase all of our supplies through a wholesale food distributor. I remember how excited I was to watch those sandwiches run down our assembly line, each one being christened with the "Sandwichman" label and popped into the cooler.

By now we had hired our first employee to help build sandwiches, and within a couple of months we had to hire three more salesmen. Our route had grown over five times. We were really on the map now.

We expanded our menu to include not only turkey but tuna, chicken salad, pastrami, and seafood burritos. One of our most requested items was our homemade fudge brownies. In the

summer months we offered salads and fruit kabobs.

We became so well known I remember people coming up to me in the parking lot on my day off, "Hey, Sandwichman, can I get a sandwich?"

So, in less than six months with the help of some good friends, a good product, the support of our community, and the desire to live in one of the most beautiful parts of the world, we were a success.

Even though we moved on to fulfill other dreams, I always look back on those two years as a testament to the human spirit and a constant reminder to go for the dream to live the way I want, trusting that I'll always have the resources I need when I need them. I think it always gets back to a basic success principal I learned years ago: No matter where you are, find out what people want, give it to them at a fair price, and count your blessings. Δ

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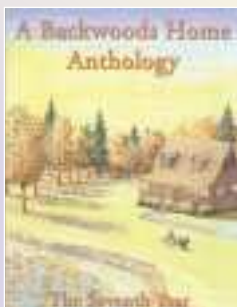
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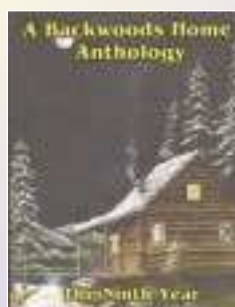
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The joys of making soap

By Grace Brockway

My initial enthusiasm for making my own soap was deflating with each book I read on the subject. They all warned of the dangers of lye, one of the key ingredients, to such an extent that I began to wonder if I would be risking my life to attempt making soap. Goggles? Rubber gloves? Lots of ventilation? No aluminum pots? And above all, don't let the lye touch you or it will burn holes in your skin.

Well, I'm happy to say my enthusiasm for the idea of making soap stayed strong enough that I decided to try it in spite of all the cautions. Being the skeptic that I am, I figured that the books were required to be extremely cautious to avoid lawsuits from individuals possessing less than a full ration of common sense. Making soap is really quite easy and lots of fun. I reasoned that if I proceeded with a sensible amount of caution things should be okay. I'm glad I did.

Cautions

Lye really is nasty stuff. It's corrosive, it gives off choking fumes until it is all dissolved in the water and it

can indeed burn your skin on contact. You need to be careful not to let the lye crystals touch your skin as you slowly pour them into the pitcher to dissolve. Stir gently with a wooden spoon when adding the water so as to avoid splashing. I learned that it is definitely a good idea to have a window open for ventilation when dissolving the crystals. I also tend to hold my breath until the lye is all dissolved just for good measure. The first few times I did this step I worked outdoors just to be safe. After a bit I decided this was overkill and reverted to just opening a window.

Wearing rubber gloves is also a good idea because the lye and the raw soap can burn. I definitely make sure to remember the gloves when cutting the day-old soap into bars and when setting the bars out to dry as they can



Among the tools you'll need are a large cooking pot, a measuring cup, rubber gloves, a glass or plastic pitcher, a thermometer, and a wooden or plastic spoon or spatula.

bite. By the way, if you ever do splash lye on your skin pour a little white vinegar on the area. The vinegar will neutralize the lye and take away the sting.

One more caution: Lye will eat through aluminum pans. Use only glass, enameled pans with no nicks, plastic, or stainless steel containers. You can use wooden spoons as long as you are aware that they will deteriorate and splinter over time. Plastic or rubber spatulas work well and don't disintegrate.

Okay, so now the cautions are out of the way. Let's talk next about what you'll need to make your first batch of soap.

Utensils

You'll need one large cooking pot in which to melt the lard/oils, a glass or plastic pitcher in which to mix the lye and water, a glass or plastic measuring cup and a wooden or plastic spoon or spatula for stirring. You'll also need a mold, such as a rectangu-

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lar plastic box, if you have one, or you can make one out of wood. I made a wooden one, using plywood for the base and 1 x 4 lumber for the sides. You'll also need a cover to put on top of the mold after you pour in your soap mixture. You can use another piece of plywood or heavy cardboard for this. A blanket will be needed to wrap it in, and some freezer paper to line the mold so the soap mixture doesn't leak out the cracks. If you'd like to do it the old-fashioned way wet an old towel and line the box with that. It will leave funny patterns on the bottom of the soap, but won't affect its quality. I have found that a little soap leaked through the towel when I tried this, however, so if you're worried about a bit of mess you may not want to do this.

Ingredients

Now, what is soap actually made of? Soap is made by combining lye and fat. When heated and combined the mixture undergoes a chemical reaction and becomes an entirely new substance: soap. The type of fat you use is up to you. If you use beef fat (suet) your soap will be brown. If you use pig fat (lard) it will be white and vegetable oils will give you a creamy off-white bar. Soap made with vegetable oils will be softer than those made with beef or pig fat. My personal favorite is lard mixed with coconut oil. The coconut oil will create a richer lather. If you'd like scented soaps, you will also need to add some essential oil. Each type of fat requires a different ratio of lye water to fat so it will be a help to you to get your hands on a book with recipes suited to the type of soap you want to make. For a simple first-try batch, I have included a couple of my favorite recipes at the end of this article.

Most of the modern soap making books will try to convince you that you should buy a scale and weigh everything, including your water, rather than to measure it in cups. This

approach will certainly give you more accurate ratios of lye to lard/oils. My interests in Colonial living led me to try making soaps with as few modern utensils as possible. Doing so taught me that using either weighed or measured ingredients will produce usable soap.

The same holds true for using thermometers and bringing your lye water and lard/oils to the correct temperatures. The goal is to get both mixtures to nearly the same temperature—somewhere around 95 degrees F. I used thermometers for a long time. Then came the day I was demonstrating soap making at a living history museum and couldn't use any modern utensils at all. I then had to rely on the old-fashioned method of feeling the outside of the containers to determine when they were the same lukewarm temperature. I was rather nervous about using this less than scientific method, but it worked just fine.

Step by step

Okay, so let's talk about how a batch of soap is actually made.

One: Pour the lye powder into a large glass or plastic pitcher. Now slowly add the four cups of **cold** water, stirring carefully so as not to spill or splash. (**Do not** use hot water, as this could cause the lye to bubble up or even explode.) As the lye dissolves the water will heat up drastically, to around 120°. It will take about 1½ to 2 hours for this mixture to cool down to the temperature range needed for mixing (anywhere between 79° and 98° works best). If you'd like to hasten this process you



The old-fashioned way to mold soap was to use a wooden box lined with an old towel that had been wetted.

can stand the pitcher in a basin of cool water. The other approach is to mix the lye water the day before, but then you'll have to raise its temperature by standing it in warm water when it comes time to use it.

Two: Melt the oils/lard on the stove in a stainless steel pan. Keep the fire low—they only need to melt and if you get them too warm, then you have to cool them off again. It's easiest if you heat them just enough to melt them. Remember, the range we're looking for is between 79° and 98° F.

Three: When the lye and lard have reached the correct temperatures **slowly** pour the lye water into the lard/oils, stirring constantly and steadily. The mixture will turn an opaque peachy colour. Keep stirring until it begins to trace. Tracing occurs when a bit of the mixture drizzled off the spoon leaves a trace or track on the top of the mixture in the pot, rather like honey does. This step could take up to an hour to occur. But it could also happen as quickly as 10 minutes, but in my experience an hour is more likely. Don't be discouraged if you never do see tracing; I've had many, many batches that never traced at all as far as I could tell and they still turned out fine. When you get tired of stirring and it still hasn't traced leave it alone for up to a half

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an hour and then come back and stir some more. If it still hasn't traced in a couple of hours, but it is showing signs of beginning to thicken, go ahead and stir in the essential oils and then pour it into the mold. It will probably be fine.

Four: Cover the mold with the plywood or cardboard and then cover the whole thing in a big blanket (wool works best) and let it sit for 24 hours. Be sure to keep it level while covering it and while it sits or you'll end up with thicker bars at one end of your mold. After the 24 hours are up, unwrap it, put on your rubber gloves, and cut it into bars. Set the bars somewhere clean to dry and cure. They'll need to sit for about two months so find a place where they'll stay clean, warm, and dry. I use an old screen, covered with a piece of muslin and set on blocks of wood for airflow. I turn the bars of soap on edge after a week or so to dry all sides.

Once they're thoroughly dry you may notice a light coating of powdery ash on the bars. This isn't harmful, but you might like to take a knife and scrape it off so the soap looks nicer. The longer the bars are stored the harder they become and will therefore last longer when used.

Five: Store them in a cool, dry place. As you make more batches, using different scents, you'll want to store them in separate boxes so the scents don't taint each other.

By now I hope you're convinced that, with a little common sense and caution, soap making can be easy, fun and highly rewarding. If you'd like to do more reading on this subject I would recommend either of these two books: *The Soap Book* by Sandy Maine (Interweave Press) and *The Natural Soap Book* by Susan Miller Cavitch (Storey Communications).

Soap recipes

Here are two good beginner recipes, one using lard and one using veg-

etable oils. As you become more familiar with soap making you can adapt them to your own tastes. The number of bars and how thick they are will depend on the size of your mold.

Basic lard soap:

13 cups of lard
4 cups of cold water
1 can of Red Devil lye
4 ounces essential oil for scent (optional)

Basic vegetable oil soap:

3 cups coconut oil
10 cups vegetable shortening
4 cups cold water
1 can of Red Devil lye
4 ounces of essential oil for scent (optional)

Sources of supplies

Red Devil lye can be found in most grocery stores, in the household cleaner section. Lard is often with the vegetable oils, as is the solid vegetable shortening (such as Crisco). Essential oils can be found at health food stores, though to get the quantity needed for these recipes you may wish to order them from a company such as Attar Herbs & Spices located at 21 Playground Road, New Ipswich, New Hampshire 03071 (800-541-6900) or on the web at attarherbs.com. Unfortunately, essential oils are quite expensive and Attar's minimum order is \$50.00, plus shipping and handling. Soap works just fine without any scent, so if the cost is off-putting, try making your first batches with no scent added. Δ

Great Holiday Gifts
See pages 54-55

Wind chill factor makes it colder than you think

By Tom and Joanne O'Toole

Checking the temperature is not always a reliable indicator of how cold a person will feel outside. There are many other determinations. One important guideline is the wind chill factor.

After many years the U.S. National Weather Service has changed the wind chill temperature index, and the new formula is now being used throughout Canada and the United States. The old index calculated wind speed in terms of how quickly water freezes at 33 feet above ground (the typical height of an anemometer), while the new replacement index is based on readings at a height of five feet above ground (average face level) and determines freezing temperatures on people's faces.

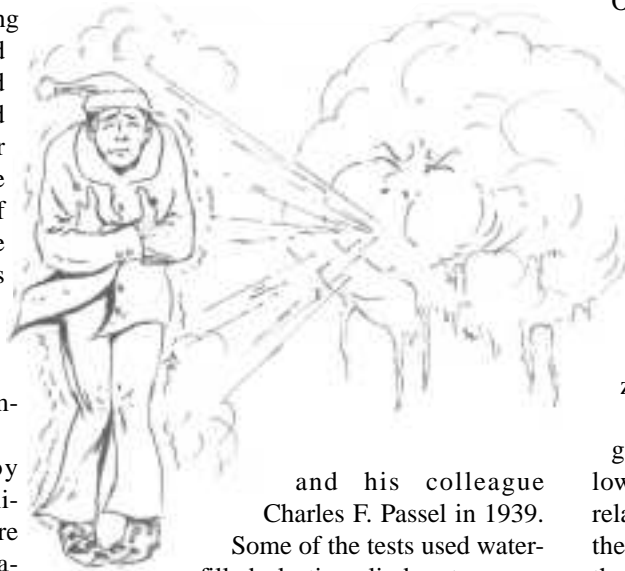
Originally developed by Arctic explorers and the military, wind chill is nothing more than an "equivalent temperature." It describes the chilling effect of various combinations of moving air, at different temperatures, across exposed skin.

There are a number of definitions for the wind chill factor, but simply put, it combines air temperature and wind speed to come up with a reading of what it really feels like outside.

Wind moving past exposed skin during cold weather increases the body's heat loss. The body pumps warm blood to the extremities in an attempt to maintain the proper body temperature. However, if the tempera-

ture is low, and the wind is strong, the body often cannot keep up with heat loss and the skin temperature decreases. While the usual effect of the wind chill is just plain discomfort, freezing of exposed portions of the body can result.

A scientific definition to that elusive characteristic of the weather known as "cold" was first put forth by Antarctic explorer Paul A. Siple



and his colleague Charles F. Passel in 1939.

Some of the tests used water-filled plastic cylinders to measure the speed at which water freezes at different air temperatures and wind speeds.

Siple coined the term "wind chill" to describe their concept of the relative cooling power (or heat removal) of the human body with various combinations of wind speed and low temperatures.

Army researchers devised the basis for the wind chill index in the 1940s to help the military develop clothing for soldiers.

Wind chill has gained popular acceptance because it is easy to understand. Weather forecasters throughout Canada and across the northern tier of the United States routinely refer to the wind chill. The U.S. National Weather Service across the southern states computes the wind chill factor whenever temperatures dip below 40° F and wind speeds rise above 10 miles per hour (mph).

On a calm day (no wind) with a temperature of say 10° F, the temperature as it relates to the body is that same 10°. But when the wind starts blowing, the temperature affecting exposed skin drops dramatically. If the wind is a relatively slow 5 mph, the wind chill factor is already down to 1 degree F. If it's blowing at 15 mph, the wind chill plunges to 7° below zero.

The stronger the wind during a given temperature reading, the lower the wind chill factor. It's the relationship between wind speed and the actual temperature that produces the chilling effect. A further concern is for outdoor activists who create their own wind or increase the existing wind—skiing, snowmobiling, and running, for example. Their movement magnifies the air flow, so they should be especially aware of wind chill.

When someone says the wind is "penetrating," what actually happens is the air movement evaporates moisture from the exposed skin, decreasing the temperature. In the summer this feels great (a reason fans are so popular) because it has a cooling

Wind chill chart

Wind speed in mph	Equivalent wind chill temperatures at actual (calm) air temperature readings (F)												
calm	30	25	20	15	10	5	0	-5	-10	-15	-20	-25	-30
5	25	19	13	7	1	-5	-11	-16	-22	-28	-34	-40	-46
10	21	15	9	3	-4	-10	-16	-22	-28	-35	-41	-47	-53
15	19	13	6	0	-7	-13	-19	-26	-32	-39	-45	-51	-58
20	17	11	4	-2	-9	-15	-22	-29	-35	-42	-48	-55	-61
25	16	9	3	-4	-11	-17	-24	-31	-37	-44	-51	-58	-64
30	15	8	1	-5	-12	-19	-26	-33	-39	-46	-53	-60	-67
35	14	7	0	-7	-14	-21	-27	-34	-41	-48	-55	-62	-69
40*	13	6	-1	-8	-15	-22	-29	-36	-43	-50	-57	-64	-71

* Over 40 mph, little added effect

- ☐ Little Danger (for properly clothed person)
- ☐ Danger of frostbite within 30 minutes
- ☐ Danger of frostbite within 10 minutes
- ☐ Danger of frostbite within 5 minutes

effect on an overheated person. Heat is lost in the evaporation process. However, this same experience can have serious consequences during cold weather when hunters, fishermen, backpackers, and other outdoor people want to retain as much heat as possible.

Through physical exertion the body heat production rises, perspiration begins, and heat is removed from the body by vaporization. Any part of the body touching a cold surface also takes away body heat (conduction), as does breathing cold air that results in the loss of heat from the lungs. So, the wind chill chart isn't strictly accurate because it doesn't take into account all the possibilities of heat loss, or the preventive measures against it.

Thus, the temperature of the air is rarely a reliable indicator of how cold a person will feel outdoors. Other elements of the weather such as wind speed, relative humidity, and sunshine (solar radiation) also exert an influence. The state of health and metabolism of a person, along with the type

of clothing worn, will also affect how cold one feels.

Frostbite and hypothermia

Two serious wintertime afflictions of wind chill are frostbite and hypothermia. Both are dangerous to those who do not know how to handle them, or become unable to cope with their effects. While frostbite is seldom fatal, hypothermia can be life-threatening.

Frostbite is tissue damage caused by exposure to intense cold, and usually occurs when wind chill temperatures fall below -25° F.

The early stages of frostbite are a burning or stinging sensation in the affected parts. The skin will be bright pink at first as ice crystals begin to form under the surface. Numbness sets in as the skin turns to pale white, with a hint of gray or yellow spotting.

When actual frostbite occurs, parts of the body begin to freeze. It usually starts with the extremities—nose, ears, fingers, and toes—spreading to the cheeks of the face, and on to the hands and feet.

Medical attention is essential. Until help arrives, or the victim can be taken to the nearest treatment center, outdoor companions should give whatever aid they can and keep the affected parts as warm as possible. Fingers are usually frostbit first, and they can be slipped under the arm pits, inside the upper thighs, or in the mouth for warmth. You can also make the temperature rise by flexing fingers and toes. Without assistance—and sometimes even with it—the consequences are gangrene, severe infection, and possible amputation.

Another result of wind chill is hypothermia, the rapid cooling of the body's inner core to below its normal temperature of 98.6° F. Some of the symptoms are violent shivering, slurred speech, exhaustion, drowsiness, disorientation, and impaired judgment. (See the following article on hypothermia.)

Hypothermia is sneaky, gradually overcoming a person who has been chilled by wet clothing, low temperatures, or brisk winds. The important thing to remember is, temperatures do not have to drop below freezing for this condition to set in.

Few people consider that smoking, drinking, prescription drugs, and narcotics present added dangers in wind chill conditions. All of these dull your sensitivity to the circumstances, and have physical effects that will make you more susceptible to frostbite and hypothermia.

Alcohol dilates the capillaries of the skin, increasing the heat loss of the body. Nicotine smoke absorbed by the blood causes the capillaries to constrict, thus restricting the blood flow to the earlobes, fingertips, and other areas of the body. Medication can have side effects too, which might mean you shouldn't venture outside during extraordinary weather.

With winter always offering the possibilities of extremely low temperatures, those who enjoy the outdoors have a responsibility to be aware of

the wind chill factor and what it can mean.

Wind chill charts for regular reference are available wherever outdoor equipment is sold.

When you venture out in winter, dress for both the weather and the wind, wearing loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing in several layers, which can be removed to prevent perspiration and subsequent chilling. Snug mittens are better protection than fingered gloves. Δ

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Hypothermia

a real winter danger

By Tom and Joanne O'Toole

Hypothermia is a deadly enemy. It steals body heat and kills more outdoor enthusiasts every year than anything else.

Hypothermia is the rapid and drastic chilling of the body's core temperature (normally 98.6 degrees F) during adverse conditions, and begins when the body loses heat faster than it can be replaced. As the body temperature drops because of exposure to cool air and cold water, things begin to happen in a predictable sequence. Left unchecked, it affects one's mental condition and physical reactions, and can result in unconsciousness. The ultimate result is death.

While cold rain or wet snow, combined with a brisk wind, create classic conditions, hypothermia is not exclusive to northern winter weather and bitter cold. When water temperatures are 50 degrees F or less, and air temperatures as high as 60-70 degrees F, hypothermia is possible. Given the right set of circumstances, it can (and does) occur anywhere.

Skin, surface fat, and superficial muscle layers act as insulation for the vital organs—heart, liver, kidneys, lungs, and the like. As hypothermia takes over, the internal temperature is dangerously lowered creating an extremely serious condition. It quickly leads to mental and physical collapse.

There are two types of this debilitating condition—chronic (long onset) and acute (rapid onset).

Chronic occurs when one is exposed to a cold environment for an extended time, and usually develops in air temperatures between 30 to 50 degrees F. It is commonly associated with winter hikers and backpackers, but can creep up on hunters, cross-country skiers, snowmobilers, and others.

Acute hypothermia happens from sudden immersion in cold water, and depending on the water temperature, can develop from within a few minutes to several hours. Boaters, ice fishermen,

is impossible, you should be wearing your Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD) that doubles your chances. A PFD not only helps insulate the body from cold water (reducing heat loss), but lessens the need to move in order to stay afloat.

You can also greatly extend your survival time by assuming the Heat Escape Lessening Posture (HELP) or fetal position—sometimes called the self-huddle. To do this, cross your ankles and bring your knees up toward your chest to protect the trunk of the body. Wrap your arms around your legs just below the knees, cross your wrists, and hold tight.

The greatest heat loss is from the head and neck, and these areas should be kept as high out of the water as possible. The other "hot spots" that lose heat most rapidly are the groin and the sides of the chest. These areas need to be protected the most.

Under hypothermic conditions, avoid the drown-proofing technique as it requires putting your head in the water, and causes you to cool faster than if floating with your head held high.

If there are several people in the water, use the "huddle" method to help each other preserve body heat. Lock your arms around one another and stay side-by-side in a circle.

Swimming to shore can be a deadly decision. The general advice is to stay with a disabled boat. Distances are deceptive, and rescuers can more easily spot a capsized boat than a lone



skaters, trappers, and those at or on water are often affected by this hazard.

Moisture is the worst enemy in the fight against hypothermia, and gets its start when victims become wet from their own perspiration, a sudden shower, or from an accidental plunge into water.

Protecting yourself

If you slip into cold water from a boat, it is best to get back in or cling to the craft. Staying as far out of the water as possible maintains more body heat, and postpones advanced symptoms. If getting out of the water

Progressive hypothermia

There are degrees of hypothermia, and you can determine the state of the victim by recognizing the symptoms. If you want to categorize the stages, consider:

Mild Hypothermia (98.6-95 degrees F): Conscious and alert; sensation of cold; pain and numbness; teeth chattering; vigorous shivering; normal speech; increased heart rate; and some loss of manual dexterity (fingers and toes).

Moderate Hypothermia (95-90 degrees F): Conscious, but mentally cloudy; diminished shivering; stumbling; non-coordination; slurred speech; weak; confused; and drowsy.

Severe Hypothermia (90-85 degrees F): No shivering; inability to follow instructions; mental confusion; staggering and frequent falling; unusual behavior; blurred vision; unintelligible speech; and possible unconsciousness.

Profound Hypothermia (85-80 degrees F): Unconsciousness; rigid muscles; greatly lowered blood pressure; decreased heart rate; diminished respiration; dilated pupils; and appearance of death.

paddler. Swimming burns up body heat, and in 50 degree F water even the best strokeers could not make a mile.

Because cold water draws heat from an individual indefinitely, any activity drains the body's stored energy. Thrashing around creates swirling water, which steals heat from the body more rapidly than still water. Even treading water brings on complications faster. Remaining motionless just about doubles the time a person can endure.

You might be surprised to know hypothermia is the leading cause of death in boating accidents.

The historic sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912 is a dramatic example of hypothermia's effect. When the great ocean liner started sinking, passengers put on their PFDs and headed for the lifeboats. When rescue ships arrived two hours later, most of the people in the lifeboats were alive, but none of the almost 1,500 people floating in the 32 degree F water (still wearing those life jackets) lived.

The colder the water and air surrounding a victim, the more sudden and severe the hypothermia. While

water will conduct heat away from the body 25 times faster than air of the same temperature, when it is choppy or there are swift currents, along with a blowing wind, the body's heat will be pulled away 35 times faster. Water chill is much greater than wind chill.

Everyone differs greatly in their ability to survive. Large people with ample body fat cool slower than small, thin people. Women cool more rapidly than men, and children cool the fastest. Of course, health, resistance, and the will to live are all contributing factors.

Treating hypothermia

Any person pulled from cold water or found on land when the classic conditions exist should be presumed to be in trouble. As one's temperature drops, the heart begins to slow, and the victim becomes weak and confused as less oxygen is delivered throughout the body.

Once the affliction begins, many people are unable to counteract the process by themselves. When the blood to the brain is slowed, the mind

fails to function correctly. There are many symptoms, but it is usually the other person who recognizes them in someone having the reactions. Frequently the person experiencing the tell-tale signs becomes too disoriented to realize what is going on.

Ignore protests that everything is okay. Denial of being cold is common, and a hypothermic may truly believe nothing is wrong. Their judgment is impaired. They become drowsy, and usually want to drift off to sleep—but to sleep is to die.

Victims can range from appearing drunk or in a delirium, to acting desperate or combative.

Any of these reactions are probably a signal someone is suffering from hypothermia: difficulty with simple tasks (clumsy actions); dull eyes; listlessness; slurred speech; incoherency; confusion; forgetfulness; fatigue; an inability to control the hands, arms, or legs; stumbling; slow breathing; cold, stiff muscles; uncontrollable shivering or trembling; the stomach cold to the touch; apparent exhaustion; or someone dozing off and being hard to arouse.

Advanced stages of hypothermia render a person unconscious, the skin turns bluish-gray, muscles are rigid, breathing is shallow, and the pulse is weak. Rewarming is crucial, and medical assistance is necessary.

Do's and don'ts

What to do? Too often people try to help, and invariably do the wrong thing for someone who is hypothermic. There are certain "common sense" things you must **not** do:

- don't massage the arms or legs
- don't raise the legs
- don't put the person in hot water
- don't allow any type of exercise
- don't give alcohol or drugs
- don't administer hot drinks or hot food

What you should do is promptly get them out of the elements, cover the head and neck to prevent further body

heat loss, remove wet or damp clothing and replace it with dry garments, keep the body warm to maintain the vital organs, and handle the person gently. Gentle handling is extremely important so as to not cause ventricular fibrillation—a condition when the heart quivers but does not pump blood.

Once it is determined a person is becoming hypothermic, it is essential others offer aid to prevent additional body heat loss. Skin-to-skin contact is an excellent way to transfer body heat. A field measure for rewarming is to remove all clothing and place the victim in a sleeping bag or in a blanket with one or two rescuers who have also removed their clothing.

If this is not possible, build two fires and put the person between them. Even better would be four fires, to surround them with heat.

If the victim appears dead, continue trying to restore body heat. Often hypothermics appear lifeless. Yet, their vital organs continue to function—but at a much lower rate—and they are alive. The medical adage is, “No one is dead until they are warm and dead.”

Ever hear of “after drop?” This occurs with deeply hypothermics after they are moved to a sheltered spot. As a person is rewarmed, the stagnated and cold blood from the extremities returns to the core of the body, dropping the internal temperature even lower. Just as recirculation is started, death may occur.

When this happens, the official cause is frequently listed as something other than hypothermia. Those in cold water lose control of their arms and legs and drown, while those on land die of heart failure. Sometimes death is listed as “due to exposure,” yet the real reason was hypothermia.

Prevention

Instead of hoping you’ll be clear-headed enough to recognize the

symptoms, know enough to prevent them. There are a number of things you can do.

When heading outdoors during questionable weather, dress properly. Several layers of loose clothing are better than tight clothes, and wool clothing traps body heat even when wet. Mittens are always warmer than gloves. Because much of the body’s heat is lost through the head, a hat, cap, or stocking pullover will trap heat and allow your body to send more warm blood to your hands and feet. Most important, stay dry and change clothes if they become damp or wet.

One of the best safeguards against hypothermia is to eat hot meals and drink warm liquids before going out. This provides the nutrition and fuel your body needs to stay warm. In the field do not allow yourself to become dehydrated, and keep nibbling on high-energy snacks to help maintain body heat.

If weather conditions worsen, seek shelter wherever possible, and protect

yourself from the wet, wind, and cold.

The best preventive maintenance against hypothermia is awareness. Everyone should put on rain gear before getting wet. For insurance, an extra set of clothing should be with you, in the camper, or at least nearby.

Outdoor enthusiasts—who frequently believe they are tougher than the other guy—should be able to recognize in advance the conditions that lead to the problem, and take the necessary precautions to avoid trouble. The savvy person also must be able to spot the warning signs in others in their group.

You don’t have to be in the wilds of Hudson Bay, on the Alaskan tundra, or in a Montana blizzard to succumb to hypothermia. Given the right circumstances, you can become a victim in the Everglades of Florida, on the southwest deserts, or in (or out of) a rowboat on a favorite lake.

Hypothermia doesn’t just happen to the other guy. We all need to know the danger signs. Δ

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Skunks

By Tom Kovach

With no market for skunk hides, the population of these smelly little creatures has increased in many parts of the country. Skunk encounters by humans and their pets can be a rather unpleasant experience... to say nothing of the smell.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has some tips on discouraging skunks from hanging around your place. They are:

- Do not leave pet food outside overnight.
- Make sure your garbage is stored in secure containers.
- Make sure all access holes to crawl spaces under your home (skunks love crawl spaces) are either sealed or covered with wire mesh.

- If your foundation is porous, bury 3-foot mesh fencing a foot from the foundation. Don't leave piles of fence posts, lumber, junk cars, etc, near your home. Skunks will use this sort of cover for den sites.

You can trap and remove skunks with single-door covered cage traps. Bait the trap with cat food (unless you have a cat). You can also use raw whole eggs or bread with butter.

If you or your pet do get sprayed, a good skunk deodorizer is a mixture of 1 quart hydrogen peroxide, ¼ cup baking soda and 1 teaspoon dish-washing liquid. Don't store this mixture in a sealed container. The hydrogen peroxide reacts with the baking soda, creating carbon dioxide gas which will build up pressure and the container could explode. Δ

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From weasels to chocolate bars — it all came to naught

By Habeeb Salloum

The biting January wind savagely stung my body, as atop my old mare I made my way through the drifting south Saskatchewan snow. This day, my six mile long weasel trap line was a route of suffering and pain. I could feel the fierce-freezing wind stabbing through my many layers of clothing. My toes inside the sheepskin-lined boots gradually became colder and colder until I could feel that they were becoming numb.

Yet, I was happy. In my saddle bags were two large weasels whose hides I was sure would fetch 50 cents apiece from the fur and hide buyer who made, in late winter, by horse and sled or buggy, his yearly rounds. For me, in the 1930s, this was a fortune. I was just entering my teens and with our family living from hand to mouth, even a few cents were, in my small world, a fortune.

The few times that I had travelled by horse and buggy with my father to Neville, the closest town to our farm, some 16 kilometers (10 miles) to the north, I often drooled over the chocolate bars in the general store where we shopped for our groceries. Of course, a few times my father splurged and bought a bar to be divided among two or three of the accompanying children. This always made me yearn for more. As a child, chocolate was never far from my mind.

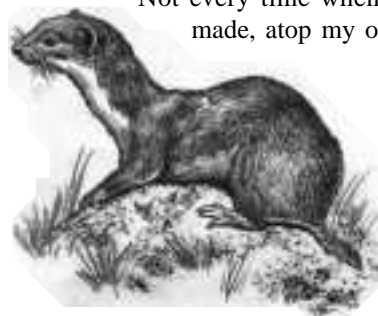
To pass the time, as I often did when inspecting my traps, I began to recite out loud the verses of Robert Service—even today, one of my favorite poets. I truly identified with the words of his poems such as *The Cremation of Sam McGee*. Over and

over, I recited his verses as my mare ploughed through the drifting snow.

Still, the cold and poetry could not snuff out my yearning for chocolate bars. I remember my mouth watering, thinking of the endless bars the weasels in the saddle bags would buy. The drifting snow and piercing cold were momentarily forgotten as I dreamt of feasting on chocolates to my heart's content. My sweet tooth world of fantasy kept me company until I was back home warming my hands over the red-hot coal stove around which, during the freezing winter, our whole family slept at night and sat around during the day.

Warmed by the fire, I was content.

Not every time when I made, atop my old



mare, my weekly round of the trap line was I lucky. Usually, if I even found one weasel, my spirits would reach dizzying heights. Most of the time, the traps were empty or closed shut by some sly coyote, an intelligent animal who often outwits the most experienced of hunters.

Nevertheless, this winter, in my mind, I had done well. From my weasel hides and the rabbits which I had shot—whose hides I sold from 5 to 10 cents each—I had saved \$5 for that day in spring when I would accompany my father to town.

Early in April that year, along with my father and elder brother, we were

on our way by horse and buggy to Neville for our spring shopping—to buy the essential foods and seeds needed for our usually large garden. However, my mind was elsewhere. The \$5 in my pocket made me feel like a millionaire. I was excited, thinking that soon I would be gorging myself with chocolate bars.

My thoughts were deep in this dream world of sweets when we drove from a dirt country road onto the dirt main street of town, lined on both sides with mostly business establishments. Neville, at that time, a village of some 200 souls, was to me a glittering metropolis, full of exciting things to see and do.

From among its establishments were two gas stations with their garages and machinery dealerships, four towering grain elevators, a railway station, two general stores filled with goodies, a lumberyard/hardware, a post office, a busy restaurant, a hand-drawn fire fighting engine, and the Neville Hotel which incorporated a beer parlor. It was a night spot which, as a child, I often heard our visitors discuss—at times, not too kindly, especially when they talked about the bar room fights.

Today, Neville is a fast-fading prairie town. Some years ago, during a visit to western Canada, I travelled to my boyhood town. The fantasy metropolis of yesteryear had become almost a ghost town. Its population had dwindled to less than 50 and the main street, although now paved, was edged by empty spaces. Here and there a few homes and businesses barely clung to life and its inhabitants, in the main, were past their prime.

Remembering

..... the old days

Qawarma

a food since antiquity

By Habeeb Salloum

The railway station was no more; of two gas stations only one remained—a sad replica of its former self; the hotel had disappeared and what businesses remained appeared to be less than thriving. A relative accompanying me and who once lived in the area, surveying the town summed up the scene, “It’s a town waiting to disappear.”

Standing on the corner besides the remaining poorly-stocked general store, my mind went back to that day when I left my father and brother and hurried down the wooden sidewalk, edged by a dirt avenue filled with horses drawing wagons and buggies, to the nearby Towler General Store. My emotions became more and more aroused as I neared my goal. The thought of feasting on not one but a dozen chocolate bars sent shivers through my body which I still vividly remember.

Almost passing out in anticipation, I picked the bars, smiling all the time at the storekeeper. Sliding a hand in one pocket, then the other to draw out the money, I found them both empty. I was devastated. Bursting out into tears, I rushed out retracing my footsteps a half dozen times. Alas! My hard earned money was gone. My dreams had come to naught.

How my few dollars had disappeared in the short space between where we had stopped and the store haunted me for days. It was a mystery which I was never able to unravel—to me, one of the greatest misfortunes of my youth. In later years, I experienced many pitfalls, but the loss of my chocolate bar money left with me the most unforgettable mark. Δ

During the 1930’s Great Depression, the hot winds were fierce as they blew across the south Saskatchewan plains. No more than eight-years-old, I was struggling with a pail of water, half as large as myself, through a blinding sand storm. Every day my chore was to carry water from a well, half a mile down from our hilltop home, for two aged sheep we were fattening for the autumn kill. Exhausted, I reached the barn where my mother was feeding the sheep green vegetable leaves.

“Why do I have to bring water for these sheep? Why can’t I take them down to the well to drink?” I was near to tears as I sat down by my mother’s side.

She smiled at my childish tantrum, “It is essential that we do not tire these animals. They must be heavy with fat when we butcher them for qawarma in the autumn.”

My parents, who emigrated from Syria in the early 1920s, had taken a homestead in southern Saskatchewan, but no sooner had they ploughed the land than it turned into desert. To survive they utilized the ingenuity they had inherited from their forefathers.

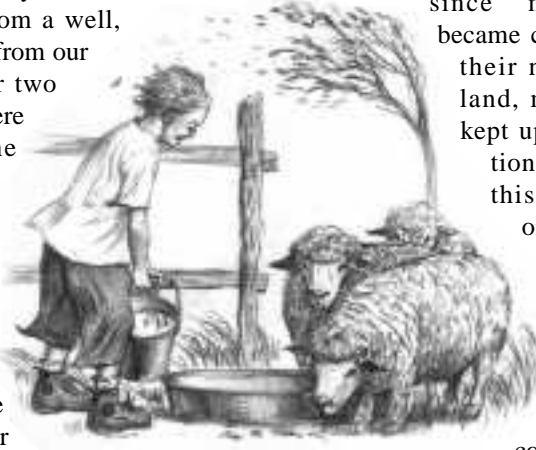
In their country of birth, farming had never been a life of luxury. Living with little wealth for thousands of years our ancestors, like

most peasants in the lands of antiquity, had developed a variety of foods which have stood the test of centuries. As had our forbears, my parents, in their new land, even if they rarely had money, always had food for their numerous offspring.

Qawarma, one of the mainstays of these historic edibles, had been developed in the Middle East, perhaps since man first became civilized. In their new homeland, my parents kept up the tradition of making this time-honored type of preserved meat. All summer long, a few aged sheep or an old

cow would be force-fed many times a day, and sometimes even at night, until they were loaded with fat.

In the autumn, after the animals were butchered, the fat was removed and melted. The meat was then cut into very small pieces and cooked in the fat. When the meat was well cooked, along with the fat, it was placed in earthenware utensils or glass jars. These were stored in a cool earthen cellar, becoming our meat supply for the following year. With no refrigeration of any kind, it was an ideal way to ensure we had meat for the whole year. Our neighbors during the summer months could only think of a roast or steak. As for our family, we always had tasty qawarma.



When we slaughtered our fattened animal, it was to us children the beginning of gourmet dining. In the ensuing days, we feasted on many succulent dishes prepared from the butchered animal.

My favorite treats were those prepared from the intestines and the stomach. Scrubbed with soap and water until they became spotless, the intestines and stomach were than stuffed with rice (if it was available) but usually with bulgur, spices, herbs, and chick peas. In the ensuing days, we feasted on dish after dish, each one more tasty than the next. Even after more than 78 years, I can still smell the enticing aroma of stuffed karsh (stomach) which I enjoyed so much in my boyhood years. However, in the subsequent days, it was the qawarma dishes to which we looked forward.

In the Greater Syria area, the farmers in the past universally utilized qawarma in their cooking. Today, except in the country homes, it is rarely employed in the kitchen. The modern city Arab scoffs at it as a peasant food, best forgotten. However, in the countryside, it is still a basic food for the hard-working farmers. In the same fashion as we utilized qawarma during our Depression years, they use it as a main ingredient in their many sapid stews and stuffed vegetable dishes.

Unlike in the past, today the making of qawarma in a modern kitchen is a simple task.

This recipe is a minuscule of our qawarma production in the years when it was the cornerstone of our daily menu:

Qawarma

2½ lbs. melted beef fat (not suet) or margarine
5 lbs. lean beef (any cut), cut into ¼-inch cubes (mutton may be substituted for beef)
5 tsp. salt
2½ tsp. pepper

Place the melted fat or margarine in a pot and heat, then stir in meat, salt and pepper.

Cook uncovered over medium heat, stirring once in a while to make sure the meat does not stick to the bottom of the pot, until the meat is well cooked—until meat sticks to a wooden spoon.

Allow to cool, then pour into earthenware utensil or glass jars, making sure the meat is covered with ½ inch of fat. Discard the remaining fat. Store the qawarma in a cool place and always return to a cool place after use.

Note: Melt as much qawarma as needed in a recipe, then discard the fat. There is no need to refrigerate the qawarma if it is well-cooked. If the utensils or jars are well sealed the qawarma will stay usable for at least a year.

The following are two of the qawarma dishes we enjoyed during the Depression years.

Eggs with qawarma (*Bayad maa qawarma*)

Eggs with qawarma is perhaps the most common breakfast food among the villagers of Syria and Lebanon. To me, the many modern breakfast foods cannot compare with this simple dish.

4 heaping Tbsp. qawarma, fat removed
4 large eggs
¼ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
2 Tbsp. butter

In a bowl, thoroughly combine qawarma, eggs, salt, and pepper.

Melt butter in a frying pan, then add the qawarma egg mixture. Stir-fry over low heat for a few moments, until the eggs are cooked. Serve immediately with toast and coffee. Serves four.

Parsley salad with qawarma (*Salatat safoof maa qawarma*)

A unique salad, this dish is today rarely prepared in the Middle East. For a delightful treat, this recipe is a must.

½ cup chickpeas, soaked overnight, then drained
½ cup bulgur
3 cups finely chopped parsley
1 small bunch of green onions, finely chopped
¼ cup of finely chopped fresh mint
2 medium tomatoes, finely chopped
1 cup qawarma, fat removed
1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper
2 Tbsp. olive oil
4 Tbsp. lemon juice
half a dozen cabbage leaves, cut in half

With a rolling pin, break chickpeas in half, then pick out and discard the skins. Place in a saucepan and cover with water, then bring to boil. Cook for 20 minutes over medium heat, then remove from heat and set aside in their water.

In the meantime, soak bulgur in cold water for 15 minutes, then drain by placing in a strainer and pushing water out by hand. Place in a salad bowl, then set aside.

Remove chickpeas from water and add to bulgur (do not discard water), then stir in remainder of ingredients, except cabbage leaves.

Place cabbage leaves in the chickpeas water, then boil for a few moments. Remove, then place on top of salad. Serve immediately while the cabbage leaves are still steaming. Each person should be served one or two cabbage leaves with their portion of the salad. Serves about 6. Δ

For more recipes go to www.backwoodshome.com

Ask Jackie

Goats, homemade peanut butter, tipi liners, cleaning greasy messes, “old” storage food, pressure canners, using potato flakes, choosing batteries, canning with “real” cans, pickles, tie-dying, apple jelly from apple juice, and preserving roses

Here I am again! Now I am canning. Thanks to you and your answers to my questions on that. I have another one, on the matter of goats. I have 12 milk goats at the moment and going to expand as soon as we get moved to our new place in Missouri. It has fruit trees (already bearing). From reading your vet book I know peaches, plums, cherries and any fruit with a pit is poisonous to them, but what kind of plants and flowers are poisonous?

We will be moving, hopefully, in September or October.

Ron and Bernice Knapp
Clearwater, KS

I really wouldn't worry too much about your goats eating poisonous plants. Of course I wouldn't recommend a diet including them, but from my experience most animals can nibble on them without side effects and only get into trouble when there is little *but* poisonous plants to eat. You see this a lot when the animals are confined to a small pasture. They quickly eat up the good forage, then resort to eating the poisonous plants and become sick or die.

A few plants that you may watch out for include lupine, bracken fern, poison hemlock (along wet areas), chokecherries, and dock (which is

edible in small doses, but can cause problems when consumed in a large amount). Talk to your County Extension Agent when you get moved to Missouri. He can tell you what toxic plants you may encounter in your county there.

As for the pit fruits most are toxic in the wilted state if green branches break off in a storm and land in the pasture. Animals can often nibble on the green branches and leaves with no ill effects; mine nibble on chokecherry leaves often. Notice, again, that I emphasize “nibble,” as animals cannot make a steady diet of chokecherry without ill effects. Good luck on your new homestead.

Jackie

Jackie, do you happen to have a recipe for making homemade peanut butter?

Scott Mancuso
Scott.Mancuso@nmcco.com



Jackie Clay

Making homemade peanut butter is easy, not to mention very tasty. All you have to do is throw one cup of roasted peanuts into a blender with two Tbsp. of vegetable oil and as much salt as you want (probably ½ tsp.). Then whiz until it is peanut butter. You will want to refrigerate and use it, as it will go rancid easier because it is without chemicals to keep it fresh.



To make crunchy peanut butter, simply whiz a first batch to the “chopped” stage, dump them into a bowl, then do the next to “creamy.” Mix the two and you have great crunchy peanut butter.

Taking it a step further, you can home-can your peanut butter to keep it from going rancid by packing it tightly into clean canning jars to within one inch of the top, wipe the

jar rim very clean, then place a previously boiled warm lid on the jar and screw the ring down firmly tight. Process the jars in a hot water bath for one hour.

Remember, this old fashioned peanut butter will need to be stirred before each use, as the oil will tend to rise to the surface when it stands. Great stuff, though.

Jackie

In the the July/August issue, in your Ask Jackie column, you stated that the liner of the tipi is called an ozan. I have lived in a tipi on and off. I strongly recommend it. It is one of the finest nomadic constructions to date. However, the ozan is actually an overhead cover used as an adjunct to the liner to help in the retaining of heat in the winter. The liner is simply called a "liner." I mention this so that if the person who asked the question wants to buy a tipi they don't end up with an item they don't want when they go to purchase it and set it up.

Also...Another great environmental-friendly method of removing built up grease is to apply any cheap vegetable oil to the troublesome area and scrub with a green "scrubby" pad. This idea is most obvious in the notion that we use some form of fat to make soap. The fat acts as a suspension material for the grease you are trying to dissolve. This will break up the majority. Then use a mild cleaner such as vinegar or plain dish soap to clean off the surface. Baking soda, used out of the box like cleanser, works great for anything really stubborn. Oh, and plan to throw away the green scrubbies when you are through. They won't be fit for anything else.

**Robin Wood
La Crescenta, CA**

I'll try the vegetable oil scrubbie treatment for my next greasy mess. You're never too old to learn. I've

used baking soda for many household cleaning jobs. It does work great.

The ozan is an extension of the lining, which can be left upright to provide more "drip" protection and insulation, or draped down over the bed or sitting area for rain or added ease of heating a smaller area. In the old days, the ozan was part of the lining, but you are right, today manufacturers sell the ozan separately from the lower liner. I would definitely recommend both. In the old days, where permanent camps were set up, the ozan, along with "stuffing" consisting of dry grass between the liner and tipi wall and additional windbreak outside, were used during the winter. In the summer, the liner/ozan were used to prevent dripping from rain and condensation running down tipi poles. I'm sorry I was not clear.

Jackie

I love your column. It is one of my favorite parts of this magazine. My question concerns some storage food that I inherited.

The man used a wooden, uninsulated shed built in the '30s to store his home canned food and other storage food items. The food was subjected to temperatures as low as 20° and as high as 95°.

There is wheat which is nitrogen packed in mylar bags, inside plastic buckets. It has been in storage since the mid '90s. There is rice, packed into plastic buckets, using the dry ice method, with no mylar bags, also from the mid '90s. My guess is that

these items are probably fine, but what should I look for before use, to be certain?

There was Jiff brand peanut butter from 1998. I opened a jar. It smelled fresh and tasted ok. There was no rancid smell about it, although I figure most of the nutrients are gone.

There were some Mountain House freeze dried meals from 1998. I cooked, smelled, tasted, then ate one of those meals. It seemed to be fine. But again, I suspect this too had lost a lot of its nutrition due to age and storage conditions.

I know not to use cans that are bulging, any food that smells or tastes bad. What about these items I have mentioned—wheat, rice, peanut butter and freeze dried meals?

**Kevin Childress
Hickory, NC**

Lucky you. If you decide to throw out these perfectly great foods, send 'em up here. I've actually eaten beans that were carbon dated 1,000 years old. They were dry beans, sealed in a pottery jar, sealed with wood and pine pitch, found in an Indian ruin in New Mexico. I also saved seeds from this batch, which went on to grow.

As to your inheritance; nearly all dry grains, such as rice, wheat, and corn keep for years and years unless attacked by insects or mold due to less than dry storage conditions. I would not be afraid to come to your house and eat any of these dry grains. If they look good, smell good and taste good, they should be fine. After the 1,000 year old beans, what's 10 years or so?

The peanut butter is fine. It goes rancid, but won't poison you. As long as the jars are sealed, you're fine. And I wouldn't worry too much about the loss of nutrients. Some do bid adios after a period of time, but many nutrients stay for years. Eat plenty of fresh foods from the garden or more recent pantry, and it'll be fine.



Same goes for the freeze dried foods. I have eaten plenty of "old" freeze dried food. As long as the food is dry, sealed, and free of any off flavors, mold or any other nasty, they should be fine. A lot of the "freshness date" stuff is bull__. But it does cause thousands of people to throw away perfectly good food. So they turn around and buy more. Now who would profit from this? Hmm. But folks buy it because someone says we'll be healthier for it. Please pass the 1,000 year old beans. At least they don't have ingredients I can't spell or pronounce, let alone recognize.

Jackie

I have hot water bath canned tomatoes and jams, froze veggies and meats for years. Due to old stories, though, I have been afraid to try my hand with a pressure canner. I have finally caved in and bought a 20-quart pressure canner and would like to know about canning salmon. We catch quite a bit of this fish and halibut, as well, living here in Alaska. I would like to preserve it in jars.

Lissa Ryan, Anchorage, AK

Congratulations. I'm so glad you gave in and are willing to conquer your fears of pressure canning. There's really nothing to it if you simply get a good canning manual and follow the directions, step by step. I can most of my fish "plain" and do the recipe thing after storage.

Salmon and other fish are easy to put up. And once you try it, I'm sure you'll go on to can meat and poultry, too. Living in Alaska, you need to try canning moose. It's our favorite meat.

Can only fish that is very fresh and has been promptly cleaned and held on ice until processing as fish is one of the foods that can be dangerous to improperly can, due to the danger of botulism. Only can fish in pint or smaller jars to ensure that the entire contents of the jar is heated thoroughly and sufficiently.

The basic process is simple. Clean and draw the fish thoroughly. Make a brine of one cup salt to one gallon of fresh, cold water. Cut the fish into jar length pieces (remembering that you must leave one inch of head room, that is, air space at the top of the jar). Let stand in the brine for one hour. Drain well. Pack fish into hot jars, skin side next to the glass. Wipe the jar rim well. Place hot, previously boiled lid on jar and screw down ring firmly tight. Process pints for 100 minutes at 10 pounds pressure, adjusting the pounds of pressure need if your altitude is greater than 2,000



feet for a dial gauge or 1,000 feet for a weighted gauge. See your canning manual for altitude adjustments.

The Division of Fishery Industries, United States Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. can provide you with many seafood canning recipes. Good canning and write if you have any questions as you go along.

Jackie

Do you have a recipe for potato pancakes using potato flakes (instant mashed potatoes)? I wrote to those potato people (you know the ones in Idaho) and all they said was "buy our mix!"

This would be a good way to use up the potato flakes I have in storage.

**Judy Benevy
Springfield, WV**

There are lots of things you can do with those potato flakes, besides making mashed potatoes. (I must say

potato flakes do better in some other things than mashed potatoes.)

Here's one recipe I use for potato pancakes from dry flakes. First grind or crush your flakes for a finer potato flour. You can even whiz them in your blender, if you have one. I add 1 cup potato flakes, ½ cup flour, 1 tsp. salt, 2 tsp. baking powder and enough milk (reconstituted dry or fresh) to make the batter almost thin enough to pour thickly off a spoon. Then add 1 large egg and 1 tsp. onion powder. Mix well until the batter is fairly thick, but will pour nicely. Heat 2 Tbsp. (more or less, depending on the size of your frying pan) shortening, then drop pancakes from a soup spoon onto the frying pan. Gently fry on one side until done, then turn with a spatula. Serve hot. They're great with ketchup, honey, preserves, or even apple sauce.

Other uses for the potato flakes are adding to canned tuna or ground meat to make patties to fry. We really like that one. Simply add a handful to a couple of cans of drained tuna and a pinch of salt. Mash together well and add an egg. Stir well and pat into patties. Now take a saucer or bowl and throw a handful of dry flakes into it. Carefully lay one patty at a time in the flakes and pat them on the top, as well, then place in frying pan with melted grease and fry on a medium heat.

Leftover roast or other meat may be ground in a meat grinder, along with the potato flakes. Mash together well, and add your egg, as with the tuna and proceed the same. The potato flakes add a nice taste and make the tuna or meat stretch further. The dry flakes make the outside of the shell nice and crispy.

You can also use the potato flakes in bread. Just add half a cup, in place of half a cup of flour. The starch in the potato flakes feeds the yeast and makes a nicely flavored bread.

Jackie

I would suggest that you change your list from "9-volt radio with fresh battery" to a "AA radio with fresh battery." Radios built to run on two AA batteries are common these days if you look for them, the batteries last 51 times longer, they are less expensive, and easier to store. 9-volt radios are generally older designs that consume far more power than is necessary using current technology. They are also prone to a reverse polarity connection which will quickly destroy the radio. Since AA batteries have many uses these days, it makes more sense to eliminate 9-volt batteries and store one backup type that can be utilized in a number of roles, should the need arise.

Leonard Umina
El Dorado Hills, CA

I didn't know that, Len. Very good information. But how about going one step further. We just added a crank/solar powered small radio to our grab and git box. No batteries to worry about, at all. As it is, our old 9-volt radio (which is our main travel radio) gets a new battery about once a year. It is listened to infrequently. In an emergency situation, you would probably only listen to a few minutes of news at a time, then shut it off, not spend hours listening to your favorite tunes. Our readers are so informed about so many subjects that it is absolutely amazing.

Jackie

I was wondering; I have done canning before and am doing it now again. I purchased some tin cans and the machine that goes with them. I have never done this before. Have never seen tin cans for canning, but it is in an old time book I have. Just wondered if you knew of anyone that has used them before?

Judy
Priddyboythree@aol.com

The only book that I've seen that has instructions for canning in tin cans is the older *Putting Foods By* by Ruth Hertzberg, Beatrice Vaughan, and Janet Greene. Many folks have put home-canned foods up in tin cans. One problem with canning foods at home with tin cans is that other than bulging cans and spoiled food, later during storage, there's no real way to know if the cans have indeed sealed properly. When home canning with the common, two-piece lids you can actually see the lid sucked tightly in when the seal is good, making this a safer method of canning at home. And then there is the cost of buying new cans for every batch of canning that you plan on doing. Canning jars and the rings are reusable; you only need to buy inexpensive new lids each year.

One hint in canning with tin cans is to "sacrifice" a couple of cans before you actually can. Partially fill them with water, seal the can with your sealer, then drop them into a kettle of boiling water. If there are air bubbles coming from around the sealed rim, your seal is not good and your can sealer must be adjusted again.

Be sure you use instructions meant for tin cans, as the canning process is definitely different than when you home-can with glass jars.

Jackie

Is there a safe to can garden vegetables without a pressure cooker?

Virginia Cawthon
onelbc@hotmail.com

No. The only safe to home-can vegetables, meat, seafood, and poultry, which are low acid foods, is with a pressure canner. The only way you can home-can vegetables without a pressure canner is to pickle them, which, using the right recipe, in effect makes them high acid vegetables because of the vinegar required to pickle them. I make pickled peppers of several types, an end of the garden

pickle, which uses cauliflower, peppers, carrots, etc. And of course, there is sauerkraut, which is a way to put up cabbage without pressure canning.

Go ahead. Pick up a pressure canner (new on sale, used at a yard sale or the Goodwill) and start canning all those goodies.

Jackie



I am planning on canning pickles this year, my first canning endeavor. I appreciate your help with these questions. Do I have to use special canning cukes? I'm currently growing a Japanese variety. Can I cut my cukes into quarters? With "raw pack" should the water be at a rolling boil before lowering jars in?

Can I use honey instead of sugar? If so, do you have a conversion table? Can I have only 2 or 3 jars in the pot or does it have to be full?

Jen French
jbfrench@mum.edu

Good luck with your pickling. It's so easy and a lot of fun, actually. To answer your questions: No, you don't need special pickling cukes. I've even used zucchini. I would stay with the way the recipe calls for, such as sliced thinly, cut into chunks, cut into spears. I'm assuming you want to quarter your Japanese cukes because they're so long they won't fit into the jars right. In this case, you can quarter them, if making spears. It doesn't matter if the end is cut. Have the water at just below a rolling boil, simmering, when you put your jars in, or the steam may burn you. Until

you have some pickling experience, I'd recommend that you stick with sugar. Then you can try recipes, switching honey for the sugar. Yes, you can put any number of jars in the hot water bath, even one. Again, great pickling.

Jackie

I am incarcerated in Gardner, Mass and am lucky enough to have a 15 by 2-foot garden plot to grow some veggies. I share the plot with four other guys and we do pretty well with what we have to work with. We have two types of hot peppers, lettuce, carrots, beets, wax and green beans, plum, cherry, & Big Boy tomatoes, Chinese cabbage, parsley, summer, and zucchini squash.

Is there a way to tie dye T-shirts with beets or other veggies?

As we are very limited in fertilizer, what else besides leaves, grass clippings, and coffee grounds could I possibly use? The area has a lot of clay and direct sun all day. We water with 2½-gallon water cans averaging 12 gallons daily.

**Tom Ford
Gardner, MA**

It sounds like you boys have a great little garden. A lot of people, with much greater resources, do not do as well. Yes, you can use beets to tie dye your T-shirts. You simply slice the beets thinly and simmer in enough water to cover them until the color has bled into your water. Likewise, you can get a yellow dye from onion skins. Maybe you can get some from the kitchen or grow a row next season.

Likewise, for fertilizer, you could get vegetable scraps from the kitchen, such as potato peelings, carrot peels, cabbage leaves, etc.? I realize that in some instances, health regulations may forbid this, but give it a try. Then dig these into the rows between the plants to prevent any possible odor or flies, which may hinder your garden-

ing endeavor. This is called trench composting and works well. Working in any organic material, such as plants that are done bearing, is also a good idea. Don't use any that appear diseased, though, or you may spread something you'll wish you didn't.

Growing a wide row of a green manure crop, such as thickly sown peas (which you can pick and eat before turning in the vines), rye, or alfalfa, then spading it in does a fantastic job of improving garden soil. Good growing.

Jackie



I have tried making apple jelly from apple juice. I always follow the instructions exactly, but it always seems not to set up. Can you give me a good recipe for this or tell me what I am doing wrong? We love apple jelly and I love to can my own vegetables.

**Reneé Hoover
Hdixiechic@aol.com**

First of all, be sure your apple juice is 100% apple juice. I would guess that you perhaps got an apple juice drink, which includes sugar and water to "thin" it down. That would certainly account for batches that didn't turn out. I use the recipe that comes in the SureJel box. It's easy, quick, and has always worked for me.

Jackie

I just had a question regarding the roses that I received two weeks ago from my boyfriend. I kept them until



the petals were almost falling off and then went to remove them into a nice keepsake dish. When I was removing them, I noticed that they were sprouting all up the stems. I would like to know if I can plant them and how to get them to root. I trimmed off the dead stock at the top and put them all back in fresh water. Any help you could give me would be greatly appreciated.

**Tiara Halo
tiarahalo43@hotmail.com**

I'm sorry, but I doubt that your roses will root and become plants. Usually cut flowers will give all they have to sprout, then wither and die, despite your best wishes they would live. You can try cutting the bottom of the stem anew, then dipping them in a product called Rootone, available at most garden stores. Follow the package directions and give it a try. Maybe wondrous things may happen. Perhaps you will give your grandchildren a bouquet of roses from these dying stems. Stranger things have happened.

Jackie

**Want more Jackie?
Check out her CD-ROM
deals on pages 54 & 93.**

Letters

(Dear Readers - Thank you for writing to Backwoods Home Magazine. The opinions and suggestions we receive from our readers are very important to us. We regret that we are no longer able to print or individually respond to every letter received due to the volume. We do read every letter received, and pass them along to the editor or writer concerned. We print a selection from our mail that best represents the views and concerns of our readers. — The Editors)

Cat loonies

Just finished your article on cats and cat loonies. I agree. After all, bob cats and coyotes have to eat, too. I have therefore freed my four neutered and spayed and inoculated cats. They were quite surprised, as they'd grown to expect feeding and loving on a regular basis. Two of them have been trying to get back in, but I read them your article again. . .

In fact, I think the same principles could be applied also to dogs. One who gets a dog to adore him unconditionally, to obey him, hunt for him, and protect him should respect the dog's natural instinct to chase and kill chickens and livestock, and to breed as often as possible so there will always be more disposable dogs.

And why coop up children? Kids would much prefer to run naked and unbathed and free and to learn by trial and error. We are over populated anyway. Let the law of survival of the best winnow out the herd.

P. S. Pierce, Biloxi, MS

Ticked off, aren't we? Calm down and read the article again. It doesn't talk about freeing or abandoning your cats. My outdoor cats are neutered and spayed and inoculated too. And they get lots of love. I also have a dog, chickens, and children, and all live happily and in harmony with each other. You can always set up situations where a dog will kill chickens or your children will run wild, but

most of us use common sense to prevent that.

I'm not sure you'll like this issue's commentary, either. — Dave

I subscribe to Backwoods Home Magazine and am concerned about personal privacy. I am also concerned about animal welfare. Sometimes these interests collide, and it helps to know the reasons behind certain policies and procedures.

You asked "What is going on?" in connection with your attempts to obtain mousers (Publishers Note—September/October 2003). Since I was employed by an animal welfare agency for 35 years, and "cat loony" is a comparatively mild disparagement, please consider the following information.

Shelters (like your first contact) and rescuers (like your second contact) do not "sell" animals. They have been entrusted with the welfare of the animals placed in their care. The fee you pay when you receive an animal from a shelter or rescuer is really reimbursement for veterinary, housing and feeding expenses. Often, the reimbursement is less than the actual cost.

Some people have tried to obtain animals from shelters and rescue groups to be used for medical research, fighting, "bleeding" for fighting, and snake food. The "inspection clause" (rarely invoked) exists to permit access in case something goes wrong. Please keep in mind that the shelter or rescuer continues to be concerned about an animal's welfare even after "custody" has been transferred. Would you prefer that they run background checks?

As far as cats running loose, do you really think cats are safer outside? (Again, please keep in mind that the

shelter or rescue group continues to be concerned about the animal even after placement.) I have seen cats that have been set afire, trapped in construction sites, and deliberately immersed in tar.

It is true that more cats might be put down when policies are restrictive. But which is kinder—the final mercy of an injection, or dismemberment-while-conscious at the hands of some whacked out teenager?

Cecily Westermann
St. Louis, MO

Using your logic, then, we should allow police into our homes at any time of the day or night because "some people" abuse kids. — Dave

I have read your magazine over the years and enjoy it immensely. Being an animal advocate as you appear to be, I felt I had to comment on the above regarding "Mousers and cat loonies." I think you have jumped the gun on your opinion of the person at the local animal shelter. I have been involved in our local animal shelter for about 10 years and we have the same conditions as to visiting the home of a person who adopts from us. We are not loonies, we encourage our people in this small country community to adopt cats as mousers, which means they live outside mostly. But, we want to make sure there is no abuse of these animals going on. You would be horrified at the things that happen to them perpetrated by people, not owls and bobcats. This we want to prevent.

We don't walk into your home unannounced, we knock or ring the bell and wait outside until you allow us to come in. But we don't let you know when we are coming, for what would be the sense in that? You would have everything all nicey-nice and the poor cat couldn't tell us that is not the way it usually is. The shelter animals have had their share of

abuse and abandonment by the time we get them. The least we can do for them is make sure they get a home where they will be taken care of. Thank you for patting them on the head when they do their job, they need that as we all do. Please reconsider your attitude toward people like us as we are doing the best we can. If you ever want to hear some of our sad stories, please let me know.

**Lesley Johnson for
PAWS Animal Shelter
Bryson City, NC**

Sorry to hear you had such a bad time with the cat people. I hope you print my one important point that I'd like to remind all of us country-cat owners of: The life of an outdoor cat is never fully "natural." They are not native wildlife. They are domestic and came to this country from Europe. They really don't do that well without any support. They need an annual vet exam with rabies vaccination, at the very least. They need for food to be available, especially in lean seasons, and shelter from the elements. There are many risks we are willing to take, but the basic support I mention is just and deserved. As you know, when they don't get spayed or neutered and if the kittens are born out in the bushes, the kits are not tame. You can't catch them or the "mum" won't let you, so they don't get vetted. Most of the kits die horrible deaths from feline disease like distemper. Please forgive the "cat loonies" because they have seen so much of this that they cannot take it anymore. They've decided it's easier to just keep 'em indoors and that is their choice. Personally, I think it is fine to let cats live outdoors. However, some folks have the attitude that "If they die, they die. If they live, they live," without any help. This attitude may be appropriate for wildlife, but not for the domestic cat. Like you said, they have had a symbiotic rela-

tionship with us for thousands of years, probably as long as the dog. Fellow predators. But I feel that they are the most taken-for-granted domestic animal of all time. They need us. We need them. So please remind everyone to support those hard working cats! They've earned it and they need our help sometimes.

**Nancy and Larry M.
New Jersey**

In issue #83 the publisher's note is titled "Mousers and cat loonies," by Mr. Dave Duffy. After reading his article, I can say that I strongly disagree with Mr. Duffy's point of view. Yes, from what I read I can see that Mr. Duffy does not abuse his working cats, he cares for them and tries to accommodate them in the best way. However, he forgets that there are people who abuse animals. the shelter lady, whom Mr. Duffy ridiculed, did not know Mr. Duffy personally. She has no idea who he is and what his intentions are toward these animals. Therefore, there is a clause about visitation rights. when I was finding homes for my dogs, I had exactly the same visitation clause in the contract. It was necessary for me to see that people adopting a pet are serious and neither want "a toy" for a child to throw away later, or a dog who is underfed, beaten, and thrown out. There is a lot of heartless and cruel people out there.

Example, last year, right after Christmas, me and my wife found two kittens in a crate outside. It so happened, the cats were given to a child as a gift, but the parents did not want pets, so they just put the crate on the street, when it was 10 degrees F. There is an example of what can happen to an animal, Mr. Duffy, and the clause in that contract makes sure the animal will be taken care of, not discarded as an unwanted gift. (for those concerned, the abandoned kittens

have a good home and do pretty well now.)

By the way, I did only one follow up on the dogs I have found homes for, and I did not go there uninvited. I was not looking for an abusive intrusion without notification, quite the opposite. I just needed to see that these people have the puppy in good conditions. I'm sure the lady at the shelter would not barge into Mr. Duffy's home and snoop around. One visit is more than enough to see if the animal is taken care of or abused, especially if you know what to look for.

Mr. Duffy is concerned about his privacy, and I respect that. The shelter is concerned about the welfare of an animal. Is that not worthy of respect?

**Vito Braverman
vaultdweller75@yahoo.com**

Greetings, I'm writing to say I totally agree with you about the cat loonies.

We had a similar experience with the Humane Society. Quite some time back we took a stray dog to the Humane Society. The poor thing was skin and bones, we had dogs of our own and could not take in one more.

I handed the dog over to this lady and gave a \$5 donation to help care for the animal, just to be nice. Then the lady proceeded to tell me off. She gave me this big speech about all the unwanted animals, statistics, the whole nine yards. I let it go thinking she just really loves her job.

Months passed by and we sold our beagle, so we thought we could do a good deed and take in one of those poor animals at the Humane Society. Remembering all the statistics and wanting to be a good citizen and all, we went back to the Humane Society. And then we were told we had to sign papers, basically giving them the right to come take the animal from our home if they see fit.

Well I wasn't about to give them permission to invade my privacy, remove a pet that by then my children would be attached to. So we didn't adopt any.

The reason why the Humane Society has too many animals isn't necessarily due to the lack of spaying and neutering as much as it is to their policies.

I know a man who is in a wheel chair, and he had a couple of dogs for companions. He had no bags of store bought dog food in his house. Someone—he thinks it was his home health care worker—thought they were saving those animals and reported him. The animals were taken away. Even though they were well cared for and fed. He gave them table scraps, as he was living on disability.

Just thought I'd share my Humane Society horror stories.

Amy Whitlock, Gideon, MO

Applause

I was a long, long time subscriber to American Survival Guide from the early 80s and was very upset when they just quit publishing it! I never got any forewarning of it ending, also thought I would never find a magazine like it again! Then your magazine started showing up in its place & I have enjoyed it greatly!!! I have re-subscribed to your mag twice and will continue till it is not published or I die. HA! HA! Keep up the good work and the faith!

**Jerry Heck
jrhspects1fan@startrek.net**

I haven't been a subscriber for very long but what I see so far I like. So many of your articles take me back to my childhood and my pioneering parents.

I am number eight of a family of nine children and grew up during the 1930s depression era. Tho we did not have a lot of the "extras" a lot of our friends had, we always had plenty to

eat, due to our big garden and Mother's ability to can and dry everything we raised.

We always had some livestock. Cow for milk, butter and cheese. Hens for eggs and fryers for Sunday dinner! A couple of sheep for wool that we girls learned to card, spin and knit. Rabbits for food and fertilizer for the garden. Hogs for butchering and smoking, salt pork and sugar cured ham. As I said we were never hungry.

I do so enjoy Jackie's articles and haven't found anything that I disagree with.

My husband (of 57 years) and I enjoy your joke page—which brings me to a cute story I heard from a gospel TV minister.

"A husband and wife were arguing about who would get up first and make the coffee.

Husband: It is your wifely duty to get up and make it for me.

Wife: The Bible says you should.

Husband: Where did you get that from?

Wife: Hebrews."

Alma Froland, Pacheco, CA

Thank you so much for the extremely enlightening article from Dr. Gary F. Arnet. You should know this is the very first time I have written into a magazine to comment about anything. Additionally, I enjoy all the research and eye opening articles you folks "ferret" out of the main stream media. Keep up the good work!

Clay Robertson, Tempe AZ

While visiting relatives last weekend in Gold Beach I was so excited to notice your office tucked in the town. I had been receiving your magazine for years, many years ago, then lost everything and seemed unable to find you again. What a thrill to be right there at the office of "The Best Magazine" available!

Obviously I am not alone in my respect as another couple from Pennsylvania was also at the door that was "closed." They were also surprised and thrilled and disappointed to be there on a day you were closed.

We are again working on a totally self-sufficient style of living on property we have purchased in Eastern Washington where we have ideal wind and solar availability, but unfortunately are not as versed or creative as you people are. I have been telling my husband about this magazine since we met—now I can show him and together reap the benefits intelligence, knowledge, and just plain joy of the Backwoods Home.

**Nancy Backlund,
Eatonville, WA**

Keep up the great work! I really enjoy your editorials, making money articles, the Coming American Dictatorship series, the Living the Outlaw Life series, the Last word as well as many other articles. I've never kept a magazine subscription as long as this one—you put together a great combo of information. Thanks!

K. Pederson, Henderson, AR

Wood splitting

Just a note on your Art of wood splitting article: I appreciate your advice on the type of handles to use. Between my 12-year-old son and I, we tend to use up at least one handle per year.

As for the wood where there is a "Y" where two limbs start, I always just cut right above and below the "Y", so that it is not so hard to split. Then if the "Y" part will fit in my stove so be it, but if not then it too hits the fire ring for those weiner roast with the kids.

On the article from Pete Earl, I have many other opinions. These of

course are because I too heat by wood and need to gather it as quickly as possible since I do have a real job. Here in east Texas, there is always some one who is clearing their land. I have been successful in finding these people through various dozer services.

Next I had a winch put on a 20-foot trailer. So after the dozer pushes the trees down, I cut the bottoms off along with the limbs, then block it into 25-foot sections. I pull up to 1100 lbs. of tree with my lawn tractor (the mower removed) to within reach of the winch, then pull it onto the trailer with the winch. That way I block it as it comes off the trailer right at my wood pile. My kids and I are into whatever we can do to make it easier! Although we still split by hand.

I also bought a load bearer for my pickup. You know the sheet of plastic that you pull out from your tail gate to the cab. Then after you load a rick of wood or so, you can just use the windup tool to get your wood to your pile for winter.

Just some of my tricks for the trade. Nice to read your articles,

Kevin Bradway, kbb@flash.net

I read your mag for the first time today online. I am a Christian man, live in Scotland, self employed (assembly work in my shed), and have a woodpile to feed our wood burning stove (I loved your article describing the wisdom of the woodpile!). There are one or two backwoodsmen over here too!

Minimum Government interference and maximum self-reliance is so important today. Keep up the good work. We may have to move to America for religious freedom if current European legislation on curbing and controlling independent Christian fellowships goes through. Overnight we could be classified as a cult, though we are a group of hard-

working family men who worship the Lord Jesus. I pray that America stays FREE and that those of you who understand a bit about what is going on continue to teach and to encourage reliance on God, individual effort, and freedom from oppression. You may have little idea how encouraged I was to read your articles Dave. Be encouraged! Keep going! Some more pilgrims may need to build a new Mayflower soon, if our freedoms continue to be eroded here in Scotland! (I am quite serious).

Eddie, Scotland

Dandelions

I'm currently living in the city with my parents while finishing college, but ever since I was a child I've dreamed of living in the country, being self-sufficient like the pioneers and the Native Americans were. I do what I can here, I've got a strawberry and raspberry patch, a couple sweet cherry bushes and some hazelnuts planted, but there's not much gardening space in my parents' yard right now. I've been asked not to start any more potted plants, since they started taking over the living room. I also run a Tracking and Wilderness Survival club in one of the nearby parks, although so far there are only two members.

That said, there are a couple of things I'd like to say about your last issue. In the article on Making Dandelions Palatable, the only suggested use for the root was to grind it into coffee. Now, maybe its because I can't stand coffee, but that seems like a waste of a good vegetable. Instead, dig up some of the fatter roots, scrub them well, and cook them like you would carrots. While tough and fibrous when raw, when cooked they become nice and tender. My parents never realized I was using both dandelion and burdock roots in my minestrone, until I accidentally let it slip a few months after I started.

Until then, they kept asking me to make it!

Also, in Jackie's article on chokecherries, she mentions that some people grind whole chokecherries, but she won't try that because the pits contain a toxin related to cyanide. Well, I just thought I'd ease her mind about that. That particular variety of cyanide is easily destroyed by heat. It's the same kind that's in apple seeds, and many people use those in their pie crusts and suffer no ill effects. I usually just make sure the cherries have simmered for at least 10 minutes. One recipe calls for grinding the raw cherries thoroughly, simmering them 10-15 minutes, adding water as necessary and stirring to prevent scorching, then add sugar to taste and simmer gently until thick enough to use as a spread. One plus is that while it's cooking it has the most heavenly cherry-almond fragrance!

Melanie Rehbein
lil_vader@hotmail.com

I have been a self-taught herbalist and consumer of Taraxacum Officinale for many years. I know the reason it is sprayed or dug up and tossed on the compost pile is because most westerners don't appreciate its most important constituent and that is its bitterness. The Chinese have embraced the health benefits of the bitter herb for centuries. They say the nature of the dandelion, called "pu gong ying" is bitter and cooling. Bitterness is a taste that our bodies need. It promotes the production of bile which is vital to good digestion.

Many of the major health problems of westerners is due to poor digestion. If you don't believe it just check out the annual sales figures for laxatives and antacids.

I enjoyed John Kallas's article and I am guilty of drizzling a pan of sizzling bacon bits over my dandelion

greens from time to time. After all I am an American.

But we need to learn to appreciate the bitterness of not only the dandelion but all the bitter herbs. It adds an interesting flavor to any soup and can give just the right kick to a summer salad. Taste and enjoy the bitterness and leave the antacids in the medicine cabinet.

Rick Brannan
Bainbridge Island, WA

Joke page

You left out the joke page in issue #83—please don't do it again.

James Dickey Jr., Memphis, TN

We won't. Your letter is only one of many chastising us. — Dave

Informed jury

That was a great jury article in your July issue. Hopefully all your readers will save the article and reread it if summoned for jury duty. Just one jury vote can be an effective check on government tyranny.

Steve Hicks
White Sulphur Springs, MT

I found the article "The informed juror" you printed in the July/August issue of great interest, particularly since I opted for the trial by jury and received the harsher sentence as a result. I've never disputed my guilt, only done as instructed by my public defender.

David Atkinson, Ontario, OR

Code inspectors

We bought 40 acres in NE Klamath County. We can't do anything without permit after permit. We had to get a permit just to start taking things to the property. If you want to use a composting toilet they told us we still have to have a modified septic system. So we had to buy a \$580 septic permit for a 1000-gallon system that we don't want. I thought this

was my land, don't we have any rights left? We are not wiring the house or hooking up to power lines. We don't know what they are going to say about that.

My husband is building this house himself, he's been a carpenter for almost 30 years so he knows what he's doing. But they won't let us do anything the way we want...

We bought this dream property for cash, now it's turning into a nightmare. We took your advice and want to live that way but I don't know if our government will let us. I thought when you bought something it was yours. I guess America isn't the land of the free anymore.

Mr. & Mrs. Frank Garcia
Oakridge, OR

Chicken eggs

I really enjoyed the article "Happy chickens, healthy eggs." I have my own chickens, around 50 hens and 6 roosters. I can sell every egg I can get. They're turned out every day. I get brown eggs rich in flavor. I got some neighbors who won't touch a store bought egg, once their taste buds got a taste of country eggs.

I was surprised at the nutritional value of country eggs. Eggs for years have gotten a bad rap. The article didn't recommend how to eat 'em, so I started eatin' 'em raw, not bad! I remember my Granddaddy punchin' a hole in the shell, then commenced suckin' the egg dry! I figured it's better raw than cooked. I wouldn't want a store-bought egg raw.

I'm lookin' forward to my first copy.

Jerome Richardson
Conway, SC

My goals

As I re-read a letter from "frustrated" Nov/Dec 1995, I am reminded of so many people that should read your magazine.

I have been an avid reader since the early '90's, and have learned so much about the government, homesteading, and people in general.

I am currently married, living on 40 acres owned by my husband. I am happy, but could be happier.

My goal in the next couple of years is to own my own property, have a farmers market, and build my own cordwood cottage.

I am suggesting to all of your readers that want to be independent or "self-sufficient" to take it one step at a time.

1. Learn everything you can about homesteading.

2. Pay off debt.

3. Begin to accumulate the stuff you'll need once you're free.

4. Dream, plan, learn.

5. Listen to Jackie Clay; never give up!

P.S. My local library could use your magazine. Do you have a special rate so I can subscribe for them?

Anna Rantala, Iron River, WI

If anybody would like to give their local library a gift subscription, we can give you a 15% discount. So just send us \$18.66 with the library's address and we'll get their subscription going. — Dave

Joke of the day

Joke of the day that you can use if you want to:

After putting her children to bed, a mother changed into old slacks and a droopy blouse and proceeded to wash her hair. As she heard the kids getting more and more rambunctious, her patience grew thin. At last she threw a towel around her head and stormed into their room, putting them back to bed with stern warnings. As she left the room, she heard her 3-year-old say with a trembling voice, "Who was that?!"

Here are some other things I found that you might want to print:

"Hold on my friends, to the Constitution and to the Republic for which it stands. Miracles do not cluster and what has happened once in 6,000 years may not happen again. Hold on to the Constitution for if the American Constitution should fail, there will be anarchy throughout the world." Daniel Webster, 1851.

"The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance; which condition if he break, servitude is at once the consequence of his crime, and punishment of his guilt." John Philpot Curran, Irish Statesman, 1790.

Ron Tackmann, Attica NY

Creating your job

On creating your own job...In 1977 while in high school in rural central Florida, I made money—more than I would've flipping burgers—by selling homemade lamps made from "found" (natural and recycled) materials. Sockets, plugs and zip cord (I later switched to molded cord/plug sets.. cheaper, easier, better) were purchased from a local surplus store. Although I probably put in more hours making lamps than

I would've flipping burgers—if you added up time spent collecting materials, buying parts, assembly and testing, sales setup (usually beside the road at a nearby crossroads) and related activities, I had a lot of fun doing it! Getting paid for doing something fun was just icing on the cake.

I took some pride in making each lamp—tinned leads, underwriters knot tied at socket (and at plug if I wasn't using molded cords) and each one signed, dated and numbered on the bottom. I've often wondered if any are still in use.

A lot of experimentation, trial-and-error, and planning were involved, even in such a simple enterprise, but it was fun, kept me out of trouble and in spending cash. There are many such "cottage industry" type jobs to be done—the secret is finding one that suits you. Will you get rich? Maybe, maybe not. Will you have fun at it? Possibly. If nothing else, you can keep—or at least help keep—yourself above water financially...if need be.

Scott Thomas, Lexington, KY

The curse of oil

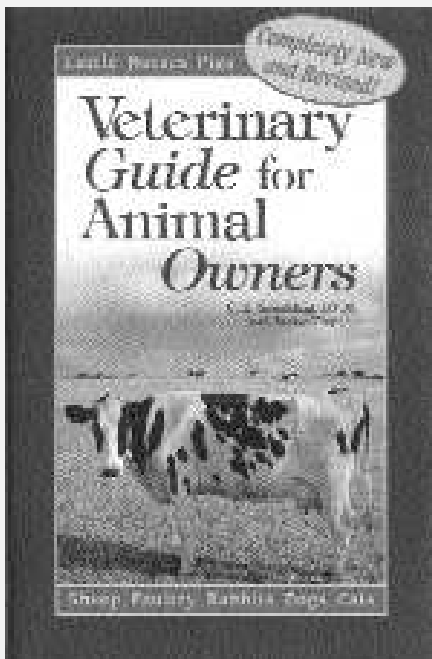
I just wanted to wholeheartedly concur with you on the Curse of oil—issue #82, July/August 2003, article, which I took off the internet. You did an excellent job, and nailed the problem perfectly.

We have been preaching this line to our Saudi friends in Aramco for some time, but it hasn't sunk in yet, I'm afraid. If you take the entire oil export rate of Saudi Arabia, 8,000,000 barrels per day, multiply by the average net-back revenue per barrel, around \$25 right now, it seems like enormous wealth. However, if you take the annual oil revenues and divide by the population (20,000,000), it is only \$3,650 per person—not all that great. Wealth comes from producing goods and services for a multitude of markets, not just selling one easily obtained product, serving one rather unsteady marketplace.

We'll keep working on them, but I must admit, it seems hopeless.

Dan Shoop

Dhahran, Saudi Arabia



Finally, an up-to-date veterinary care book for the layperson that is thorough, easy to read, and covers cattle, horses, pigs, sheep, goats, rabbits, dogs, and cats. This well-illustrated book takes great pains to explain how to recognize symptoms of a wide variety of problems as well as how to treat them. It also tells you when a call to your veterinarian is necessary, as some problems cannot be handled by anyone else.

And, because the best "cure" for most problems is prevention, each chapter starts with the basics of the daily care of the animals discussed including tips for housing, feeding, restraint, breeding, and caring for the young.

The authors are C.E. Spaulding and Jackie Clay. Spaulding studied veterinary medicine at Michigan State University and had a private practice for over 25 years.

Jackie Clay is a trained veterinary field technician with years of experience in the field and in writing animal health care articles. She has written many articles on animal care, gardening, and the self-reliant lifestyle for *Backwoods Home Magazine* and her *Ask Jackie* column is now a regular feature in these pages.

Veterinary Guide for Animal Owners, C.E. Spaulding, D.V.M. & Jackie Clay. 432 pages, Rodale Press, paperback. Available through *Backwoods Home Magazine* for \$20.95